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CALDERON

HIS LIFE AND GENIUS

WITH

SPECIMENS OF HIS PLAYS

BY

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH, B. D.

AUTHOR OF "THE STUDY OF WORDS"—"ENGLISH, PAST AND PRESENT"—"LESSONS ON PROVERBS"—"SYNONYMS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT"—"POEMS," ETC

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PREFACE.

These translations have lain by me for nearly twice the nine years during which Horace recommended that a poem should remain in its author's power. They formed part of a larger scheme long ago conceived; but in the carrying out of which I presently discovered inner difficulties; not to say that it would have required, as I also soon was aware, a far greater amount of time and labor than I was either willing or had a right to bestow upon it. The scheme was consequently laid aside. At the same time I did not lay aside the hope of rescuing a few portions of my work from the absolute oblivion to which the remainder, written and unwritten, was consigned; and of preparing these, if ever a convenient time should arrive, for the press. The time was long in arriving. It is, however, these portions which, with a few later

revisions, and here and there a gap filled up, constitute the verse translations occupying the latter half of this little volume.

A first sketch of the Memoir prefixed to these translations dates back to the same period. I could not, however, let this go forth without seeking to bring up at least its literary notices to the present time; and in doing this, in supplying what, as I passed it again under my eye, seemed to me most lacking in it, and in modifying earlier judgments, till they expressed more exactly present convictions, I find that, without having at all expected or desired this result, I have re-written the greater portion of the Memoir.

ITCHENSTOKE, *April* 9, 1856.

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ON

THE LIFE AND GENIUS OF CALDERON.

CHAPTER I.

THE LIFE OF CALDERON.

THERE are few poets who have been so differently judged—who have been set so high, and so low—as Calderon; few who have been made the objects, on one side, of such enthusiastic admiration and applause; on the other, of such extreme depreciation and contempt. Consult the Schlegels, or any other of his chief German admirers, and you would suppose that in him Shakespeare had found his peer; that he had attained unto "the first three," to Homer, and Dante, and Shakespeare; and that he, a fourth, occupied a throne of equal dignity with theirs. For Sismondi, on the contrary, and for others not a few, he is little better than a dexterous playwright, an adroit master of stage-effect; a prodigal squanderer of poetical gifts (which, indeed, they do not deny to have

been eminent) on a Spanish populace, whose tastes he flattered, and from whom he obtained that meed of present popularity which was justly his due, being now to seek for no other.

And perhaps there has been still greater divergence and disagreement in the estimates which have been formed of the ethical worth of this poet. "In this great and divine master the enigma of life is not merely expressed, but solved." These are the words of Frederic Schlegel, setting him in this above Shakespeare, who for the most part is content, according to him, with putting the riddle of life, without attempting to resolve it." And again: "In every situation and circumstance Calderon is, of all dramatic poets, the most Christian." And Augustus Schlegel, who had not his brother's Romanist sympathies to affect his judgment, in a passage of rare eloquence in his *Lectures on Dramatic Literature*,* characterizes the religious poetry of Calderon as one never-ending hymn of thanksgiving, ascending continually to the throne of God. Falling in, too, with the very point of his brother's praise, "Blessed man!" he exclaims, "he had escaped from the wild labyrinths of doubt into the stronghold of belief; thence, with undisturbed tranquillity of soul, he beheld and portrayed the storms of the world. To him human life was no longer a dark riddle." These two set the example; many followed in their train.

* Lecture 29.

Others, meanwhile, have not been wanting who have been able to see nothing but what is morally perverse and injurious in his poetry. Thus Salfi goes so far as to say that he can never read Calderon without indignation; accuses him of having no other aims but to make his genius subservient to the lowest prejudices and superstitions of his countrymen. And others in the same spirit describe him as the poet of the Inquisition (the phrase is Sismondi's), of Romanism in its deepest degradation, in its most extravagant divorce of religion from morality; what morality he has being utterly perverted, the Spanish punctilio in its bloodiest excess — with much more in the same strain.

Many, too, of those who abstain from passing any such strong moral condemnation on the Spanish poet, or looking at his writings from any such earnest ethical point of view, while they give him credit for a certain amount of technical dramatic skill, have no genuine sympathy with him, no hearty admiration for his works. They find everywhere more to blame than to praise; brilliant but cold conceits, oriental hyperboles, the language of the fancy usurping the place of the language of the heart; and when they praise him the most, it is not as one of the stars shining with a steady lustre in the poetical firmament, but as an eccentric meteor, filling the mind of the beholder with astonishment rather than with admiration. Such a "frigid" character of him (it is his own word) Hal-

lam* has given, acknowledging at the same time the slightness of his acquaintance, both with Calderon himself and with the language in which he has written; and such the author (Southey? or Lockhart?) of an able article in the *Quarterly Review*,† with whose judgment Hallam has consented in the main.

That my own judgment does not agree with theirs who set him thus low in the scale of poetical merit, still less with theirs who charge him with that profound moral perversity, I need hardly affirm. For, small and slight as this volume is, I should have been little tempted to bestow the labor it has cost me on that which, as poetry, seemed to me of little value; and still less disposed to set forward in any way the study of a writer who, being what his earnest censurers affirm, could only exert a mischievous influence, if he exerted any, on his readers. How far my judgment approaches that of his enthusiastic admirers —what drawbacks it seems needful to make on their praises as extravagant and excessive—what real and substantial worth will still, as I believe, remain—it will be my endeavor to express this in the pages which follow.

But these considerations will be most fitly introduced by a brief sketch of Calderon's life, and of the circumstances of Spain before and during the period when he flourished, so far as they may be supposed to

* Literature of Europe, vol. iii., pp. 532–541.

† Vol. xxv., pp. 1–24, The Spanish Drama.

have affected him and his art. So shall we be able better to understand (and it is not unworthy of study) that great burst of dramatic invention, undoubtedly after the Greek and English the most glorious explosion of genius in this kind which the world has ever beheld, and which, beginning some ten or fifteen years before Calderon's birth, may be said to have expired when he died. There are, indeed, only three great original dramatic literatures in the world; and this, in which Calderon is the central figure, is one. Greece, England, and Spain, are the only three countries, in the western world at least, which boast an independent drama, one going its own way, growing out of its own roots, not timidly asking what others have done before, but boldly doing that which its own native impulses urged it to do; the utterance of the national heart and will, accepting no laws from without, but only those which it has imposed on itself, as laws of its true liberty, and not of bondage. The Roman drama and the French are avowedly imitations; nor can all the vigor and even originality in detail, which the former displays, vindicate for it an independent position: much less can the latter, which, at least in the nobler region of tragedy, is altogether an artificial production, claim this; indeed, it does not seek to do so, finding its glory in the renunciation of any such claim. Germany has some fine plays, but no national dramatic literature; the same must be said of Italy; and the period has long since past for

both when it would have been possible that this want should be supplied.

For us, who behold SPAIN only in the depth of her present bankruptcy, literal and figurative, it is difficult to realize the lofty elevation of power, and dignity, and honor, at which she stood in the sixteenth century, and, while as yet the secret of her decadence was not divined, during a portion of the seventeenth; the extent to which the Spaniard was honored with the fear, the admiration, and the hatred, of the rest of Europe. That sixteenth had been for him a century of achievements almost without a parallel. At the close of the century preceding, the Christians of Spain had brought their long conflict with the infidel at home to a triumphant close. But these eight hundred years of strife had impressed their stamp deeply on the national character. "As iron sharpeneth iron," so had this long collision of races and religions evoked many noble qualities in the Spaniard, but others also most capable of dangerous abuse. War with the infidel, in one shape or another, had become almost a necessity of the national mind. The Spanish cavalier might not be moral, but religious, according to that distinction between morality and religion possible in Roman catholic countries, he always must be, by the same necessity that, to be a gentleman, he must be well born, and courteous, and brave.

The field for the exercise of this Christian chivalry

at home was no sooner closed to him, than other and wider fields were opened. Granada was taken in 1492; in the very same year Columbus discovered a New World, to the conquering of which the Spaniard advanced quite as much in the spirit of a crusader as of a gold-seeker; and we wrong him altogether, at least such men as Cortez, if we believe that only the one passion was real, while the other was assumed. All exploits of fabled heroes of romance were outdone by the actual deeds of these conquerors—deeds at the recital of which the world, so long as it has admiration for heroic valor and endurance, or indignation for pitiless cruelty, will shudder and wonder. But this valor was not all to be lavished, nor these cruelties to be practised, on a scene remote from European eyes. The years during which Cortez was slowly winning his way to the final conquest of the Mexican empire, were exactly the earliest years of the Reformation in Europe (1518–1521). This Reformation, adopted by the north of Europe, repelled by the south, was by none so energetically repelled as by the Spaniards, who henceforward found a sphere wide as the whole civilized world in which to make proof that they were the most Christian of all Christian nations, the most catholic of all catholic. Spain did not shrink from her part as champion of the periled faith, but accepted eagerly the glories and the sacrifices which this championship entailed. Enriched by the boundless wealth of the Western world, having passed in

Philip the Second's time from freedom into despotism, and bringing the energies, nursed in freedom, to be wielded with the unity which despotism possesses, she rose during the sixteenth century ever higher and higher in power and consideration.

It was toward the end of that century—that is, when Lope de Vega took possession of the rude drama of his country, and with the instincts of genius strengthened and enlarged, without disturbing, the old foundations of it—that the great epoch of her drama began. All that went before was but as the attempts of Kid and Peele, or at the utmost of Marlowe, in ours. The time was favorable for his appearance. Spain must, at this time, have been waiting for her poet. The restless activity which had pushed her forward in every quarter, the spirit of enterprise which had discovered and won an empire in the New World, while it had attached to her some of the fairest provinces and kingdoms of the Old, was somewhat subsiding. She was willing to repose upon her laurels. The wish had risen up to enjoy the fruits of her long and glorious toils; to behold herself, and what was best and highest in her national existence, those ideals after which she had been striving, reflected back upon her in the mirrors which art would supply; for she owed her drama to that proud epoch of national history which was just concluding, as truly as Greece owed the great burst of hers, all which has made it to live for ever, to the Persian war, and to the eleva-

tion consequent on its successful and glorious conclusion. The dramatic poet found everything ready to his hand. Here was a nation proud of itself, of its fidelity to the catholic faith, of its championship, at all sacrifices, of that faith; possessing a splendid past history at home and abroad—a history full of incident, of passion, of marvel, and of suffering—much of that history so recent as to be familiar to all, and much which was not recent, yet familiar as well, through ballad and romance, which everywhere lived on the lips of the people. Here was a nation which had set before itself, and in no idle pretence, the loftiest ideals of action; full of the punctilios of valor, of honor, of loyalty; a generation to whom life, their own life, or the life of those dearest, was as dust in the balance compared with the satisfying to the utmost tittle the demands of these; so that one might say that what Sir Philip Sidney has so beautifully called "the hate-spot ermeline"—the ermine that rather dies than sullies its whiteness with one spot or stain—was the model they had chosen. Here was a society which had fashioned to itself a code of ethics, which, with all of lofty and generous that was in it, was yet often exaggerated, perverted, fantastic, inexorable, bloody; but which claimed unquestioning submission from all, and about obeying which no hesitation of a moment might occur. What materials for the dramatic poet were here!

Nor may we leave out of sight that there were cir-

cumstances, which modified and rendered less fatal than we might have expected they would prove, even those influences that were manifestly hostile to the free development of genius in Spain. Thus it is quite true that Spain may be said finally to have passed from a land of constitutional freedom into a despotism, with the crushing by Philip II. of the liberties of Aragon. But for all this, the mighty impulses of the free period which went before, did not immediately fail. It is not for a generation or two that despotism effectually accomplishes its work, and shows its power in cramping, dwarfing, and ultimately crushing, the faculties of a people. The nation lives for a while on what has been gained in nobler epochs of its life; and it is not till this is exhausted, till the generation which was reared in a better time has passed away, and also the generation which they have formed and moulded under the not yet extinct traditions of freedom, that all the extent of the spiritual, moral, and intellectual mischief, becomes apparent. Moreover, it must not be lost sight of that the Spanish was not an anti-national despotism, such as the English would have been if Charles I. had succeeded in his attempt to govern without parliaments. On the contrary, it was a despotism in which the nation gloried; which itself helped forward. It was consequently one in which the nation did not feel that humiliation and depression, which are the results of one running directly counter to the national feeling, and being the

permanent badge of unsuccessful resistance to a detested yoke.

Even the hateful Inquisition itself, by discouraging, and indeed absolutely repressing, all activity of genius in every other direction — destined as it was absolutely to extinguish it in all — yet for a season gave greater impulse to its movements in one direction. There was one province, that of poetry — and, above all, dramatic poetry — over which it never seems to have extended that jealous and suspicious surveillance with which it watched every other region of human thought and activity.

Such are some features of the Spain in which Lope de Vega, Calderon, and their peers, grew up; under these influences they were formed. At the time, indeed, when Calderon was born, and much more when he was rising into manhood, the glory of his country was somewhat on its decline. Gray hairs were upon her. She, however, knew it not. Many glimpses of her past glory gilded her yet. Many pledges and evidences of her former greatness, not a few bequests of that heroic past, remained with her still. The Netherlands were not yet hopelessly lost; Portugal was still an appanage of the Spanish crown; the youthful Condè had not yet destroyed at Rocroi the prestige of that hitherto invincible infantry of Spain. She might still believe herself rich, because the treasures of the Indies flowed through her coffers; not knowing that these were barren-making streams for

her, extinguishing in their passage her own industry and manufactures, and then passing on to enrich foreign or hostile soils. The secret of her decay was concealed, in great part, not merely from herself, but from others, from all but the most understanding. It was to Spain that our first James just at this period turned, when he sought a wife for his only son, as counting that alliance more desirable than any other in Europe.* And when that marriage came to nothing, and the prospects of a contest with Spain rapidly succeeded those of an alliance with her, how great she still was in the judgment of the statesmen of Europe may be seen from the very remarkable *Considerations touching a War with Spain*, 1624, by Lord Bacon. "A war with Spain," he there declares, "is a mighty work:" and this, even while the keen-eyed statesman plainly saw that the colossus was not so great in reality as in appearance and reputation, and spied with a searching eye its weaknesses; and, most important of all, did not fail to note that every day the relative strength of the two states was changing in favor of England, which was ever rising in strength as Spain was falling.

Still the dêcadence of Spain was not openly ac-

* Calderon was resident in Madrid in the year of Prince Charles's romantic visit to that city (1623) — a young poet of rising fame, but as yet filling no such office as would cause him to take any share in the shows and triumphs with which that visit was celebrated. A few years later, and we should not probably have wanted some gorgeous mythological spectacle from his pen, in which the alliance and future nuptials would have been shadowed forth.

knowledged as yet. Long after others had divined, and even proclaimed, her own duteous children would have refused to see it. They certainly did not perceive it as yet. The near future of their country's fall was hidden from them. They saw not her who a little while before was the chief and foremost among the nations, already failing in the race, to fall presently into the rear—nay, to be thrown out altogether from the great, onward march of European civilization. It was well, at least for her poets and her painters, that to hide this from their eyes was possible to them still. A very little later, when the symptoms of her rapid decay became more numerous and also more palpable, so that even they could not have missed them, it would have been impossible for a great poet to have arisen in Spain. For a great poet, without a great country, without a great people for him to be proud of, and which in return he feels shall be proud of him, without this action and reaction, never has been, and can never be. Elegant and even spirited lyrics, graceful idyls, comedies of social life, with all the small underwood of poetry, can very well exist, as they often have existed, where there is little or no national life or feeling; but its grander and sublimer forms—epos, and tragedy, and the loftier lyrics—can grow out of, and nourish themselves from, no other soil than that of a vigorous national existence. The names of Calderon and of his great dramatic contemporaries—of the most illustrious among the

Spanish painters (the lives of Velasquez and Murillo run pretty nearly parallel to his) — are evidences that such a period was not yet overlived in Spain. At the same time, it must be owned that he stood on its extremest verge. He who saw the sun of his country's glory, if not indeed at its zenith, yet still high in the heaven, saw it also in its swift decline and descent; and, had his long life been extended only a little longer, he would have seen it set altogether.

The most important source from which the materials for Calderon's life are derived is a short biography written by his friend Vera Tassis. This was prefixed by him to an edition of Calderon's plays, the first volume of which was published the year after his death.* Brief as this record is, it contains even less than the first aspect of its narrow limits would lead one to expect; for it is composed in the worst style of affected eloquence, however this may be partially redeemed by the tone of true affection which makes itself felt even through a medium so unfavorable as this. Considering, too, the biographer's opportunities of knowledge, derived from a sister of the poet who survived him, and from other of his friends, as well as from personal intercourse (for he speaks of Calderon's death as being to him the loss of a parent, a master, and a friend), its notices are very few and

* This edition (Madrid, 1682–1691, 9 tom. 4to) is naturally the first which contains his collected plays.

unsatisfactory. The writer would indeed have deserved much better of the after-world, if, instead of pompous and turgid eulogiums, which would have fitted almost equally well any great poet who had ever lived, he had given a few characteristic details of Calderon's life and habits. These, unfortunately, are wanting altogether.

And even the information which he does afford us is not altogether accurate; for he stumbles at the very threshold, making the year 1601 to have been that of Calderon's birth, a mistake which has since propagated itself widely; while an extract from his baptismal register, preserved in a very trustworthy work called *The Sons of Madrid*,* and entitled, as documentary evidence, to far greater weight, gives February 14, 1600, as the day of his baptism; not to say that in another rare work,† published by a friend in his honor, and written immediately after his death, it is distinctly stated, on the authority of Calderon himself, that he was born January 17, 1600. Madrid had the honor of being his birthplace.

His father, secretary to the treasury board under Philip II. and Philip III., was of a good family of the Montaña, a mountainous district so called in the neighborhood of Burgos; his mother of a noble Flemish family long settled in Castile. His parents were, according to *The Sons of Madrid*, "very Christian and

* *Los Hijos de Madrid,* t. 4, p. 218.
† *Obelisco Funebre.*

discreet persons, who gave their children an education conformable to their illustrious lineage." These children were four: an eldest son, D. Diego, who succeeded to the family estates and honors; a daughter, who became a professed nun of the order of St. Clare, and survived the poet by a year; D. Josef, who followed the career of arms, and fell in battle in the year 1645; and D. Pedro, the youngest, with whom we have to do.* He received his first rudiments of education in the Jesuit college at Madrid; and then for five years studied philosophy and the scholastic theology (of which fact abundant traces appear in his writings) at the university of Salamanca. Leaving it at nineteen, he spent the five or six years that followed at the capital, having already in his fourteenth year shown the bent of his genius toward the stage by a drama, *The Chariot of Heaven*, which has not come down to us.

Like so many other of the most distinguished authors of Spain, he began his active career as a soldier —in his twenty-fifth year serving in the Milanese, and afterward in the Low Countries, his biographer assuring us that his studies were not through these his more active engagements at all intermitted. Some have supposed that he was present at the siege and taking of Breda by Spinola, the great Genoese captain in the service of Spain (1625); inferring this from his singular familiarity with all the details of

* *Los Hijos de Madrid*, t. 1, p. 305; t. 2, p. 218; t. 3, p. 24.

this famous feat of arms, as displayed in his play called *The Siege of Breda*.* How long his military career lasted we are not told. We find him, at a date somewhat later than this, again at Madrid, whither he had been summoned by the reigning monarch, Philip IV. In 1630, his fame was so well established, that Lope de Vega recognises him as his true and equal successor; while, five years later, the death of Lope (1635) left him the undisputed occupant of the highest place among the poets of Spain, a pre-eminence which he held without the challenge of a rival to the end of his life.

It was observed just now that Calderon came to Madrid in obedience to the summons of Philip IV. This monarch, himself an author, and writing his own language with precision and purity,† was passionately addicted to the drama. Indeed, some plays, said not

* The surrender of Breda was a subject which employed the pencil of Velasquez as well as the pen of Calderon. The picture bearing this name is a chief ornament of the Royal Gallery at Madrid, and one of the greatest works of a great master. (See Stirling, *Velasquez and his Works*, p. 148.) The play, though spirited, is too much a mere chronicle of the siege and capitulation. It was probably a mere piece for the occasion. It is pleasant to notice the justice which Calderon does to the gallantry of Morgan, an English captain, who, with a small body of his countrymen, as we know from other sources, assisted in the defence of the place.

† Pellicer, a Spanish scholar of the last century, and librarian of the Royal Library at Madrid, states that in that library are preserved MS. translations by this king of Francis Guicciardini's *History of the Wars of Italy*, and also of his nephew's *Description of the Low Countries;* to the latter of which a graceful and sensible prologue has been prefixed by the king. (*Origen y Progresos de la Comedia en España*, Madrid, 1804, t. 1, p. 162.)

to be without merit, are ascribed, but on no sufficient evidence, to him. Unfortunately, he expended on his artistic and literary pursuits a great portion of that time, and those energies, which would have been far better bestowed on the fulfilment of the kingly duties which were so greatly neglected by him. There was much, however, in the character of the youthful monarch (he was five years younger than the poet), which was gracious, amiable, and attractive;* and a little anecdote or two imply that the relations between the two were easy and familiar. Director of the court theatre, which was the post that Calderon, whether nominally or not, yet really occupied now, does not appear a very promising, nor yet a very dignified one, for a great poet to assume; yet one not very dissimilar Goethe was willing for many years to sustain at Weimar: and, no doubt, like so many other positions, it was very much what the holder was willing to make it.

* For a happy sketch of his charactsr, see Stirling, *Velasquez and his Works*, London, 1855, pp. 46–48. Dunlop's *Memoirs of Spain during the Reigns of Philip IV. and Charles II.* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1834), are not very profound, and their idiom is occasionally rather Scotch than English. They contain, however, enough of information agreeably conveyed, and which is not very easily found elsewhere, to occasion a regret that he never carried out a purpose entertained by him (see vol. i., p. 9; vol. ii., p. 415) of dedicating a third volume to the history of dramatic art in Spain during the seventeenth century. As it is, the intention of devoting an especial treatise to this subject has caused him almost wholly to pass by a matter, which, in the life of such a monarch as Philip IV., could else have hardly failed to occupy some prominence in his book.

A member of the military order of Santiago (for in 1637 he had received this honor), Calderon had the opportunity of showing in his middle age that his martial ardor was not quenched. On occasion of the revolt in Catalonia, in 1640, the members of the three military orders were summoned to take the field. His biographer tells us that it was only by a device that Calderon was able to take that part in the perils of the campaign to which in duty and honor he felt himself bound. The king wished to detain the poet at his side. Garcilasso, the author of the most elegant lyrics after the Italian fashion which Spain had produced, had perished quite in his youth at the storming of a fortified mill, leaving only the first-fruits of his graceful genius behind him. Philip may not have been willing to expose a far greater light to a like premature extinction. At any rate, he desired to hinder the poet from going; and this he supposed that he had effectually done, when he gave him a festal piece to prepare, which, according to the king's anticipation, would abundantly occupy him until after the expedition had set out. Calderon, however, defeated his purpose—bringing his appointed task with such rapidity to a close, that he was able to follow and join the army in time, as Vera Tassis tells us, to share with it all its dangers until peace was concluded.

Such is the account of his biographer; and such conduct would be entirely in keeping with the chival-

rous character of Calderon: yet it is not without its difficulties. In the first place, the king could only have expected, by such an artifice as this, to detain him from the perils of the campaign, on the assumption that the war would be over almost as soon as begun. A fleet which had once set sail it might be impossible afterward to join; but infinite opportunities must have offered of joining an army only two or three provinces off, and between such and the capital there must have been constant communication. Perhaps such expectation of immediate success may have prevailed at Madrid. As it proved, the contest in Catalonia lasted for twelve years, the revolt being only suppressed in 1652 —which makes another difficulty. Vera Tassis states that Calderon remained with the army till peace was concluded; which would be for these twelve years. It is quite certain that long before this he was again in attendance on the court. In 1649, he took a prominent share in preparing the shows and festivities which welcomed the arrival of Philip's new queen, Anna Maria of Austria, to Madrid; while, in 1651, a year before the rebellion was quelled, he had taken holy orders: for, like so many other of his countrymen, illustrious in war, or statesmanship, or art, the career which he began as a soldier he concluded as a priest.

In a church so richly endowed as the Spanish was then, and one in which the monarch had been so successful in keeping the richest endowments in his own gift, it was not likely that Calderon would long re-

main without preferment. The favor of his royal patron speedily conferred more than one preferment upon him; and he continued, from time to time, to receive new proofs of his master's liberality, and of his wish to attach him as closely as possible to his person. His high court favor ended with the life of Philip. The death of that monarch was doubtless to Calderon not merely the loss of a patron, but almost of a friend. This event took place in 1665, and with it the faint *nimbus* of glory, which had until then continued, more or less, to surround the Spanish monarchy, quite disappeared. A feeble minor, not less feeble in intellect than in age, occupied the throne. The court was the seat of miserable and disgraceful intrigues. From that empire, once so proud and strong, cities and provinces were rent away by the violence or fraud of Louis XIV., almost as often as he chose to stretch out his hand and take them. He was, indeed, only hindered from tearing that empire piecemeal, by the hope that a descendant of his own should ere long inherit it altogether.

Literature, with everything else, felt the deeply depressing influence of the time. Calderon, however, still sang on; he belonged to a better epoch, and brought the poetic energies of that epoch into the evil days upon which he was now fallen; though he too began about this time to show, in some degree, the effects of age, and, it may be, of the sunken splendors of his native land. To this later period of his life

belongs a very slight and transient glimpse which we obtain of the poet—one however which, in default of fuller information, must not be passed by. Nor, indeed, is this little notice without a certain point of its own; it is, indeed, impossible not to admire the Frenchman's self-satisfied conviction of his immeasurable superiority as a critic over the benighted Spaniard, who was ignorant of the unities. It is a French traveller who, in his *Diary of a Journey in Spain*,* thus writes: "Yesterday came the marquis of Eliche,† eldest son of Don Luis de Haro, and Monsieur de Barriére, and took me to the theatre. The play, which had been before brought forward, but was newly revived, was naught, although it had Don Pedro Calderon for author. At a later hour I made a visit to this Calderon, who is held the greatest poet and the most illustrious genius in Spain at the present day. He is knight of the order of Santiago, and chaplain to the chapel of the Kings at Toledo; but I gathered from his conversation that his head-piece was furnished poorly enough. We disputed a good while on the

* Boisel, *Journal de Voyage d'Espagne*, Paris, 1669, p. 298. I have never been able to fall in with this book, and the passage as given above is a translation of a translation; and whether a perfectly accurate rendering of the original I can not be sure.

† This was he who a few years earlier (in 1662) set on foot a small gunpowder plot of his own, and nearly contrived to blow up Philip IV. with the royal family at the theatre of the *Buen Retiro*. He was pardoned for his father's sake. His good conduct in the field seems to have caused his treason to be forgotten; and he rose in the succeeding reign to the highest offices in the state.

rules of the drama, which in this land are not recognised, and about which the Spaniards make themselves merry."

Though no longer a foremost favorite of the court, Calderon's relations to it still continued, and his services were put in requisition whenever the so-called *fiestas*, or dramatic spectacles for peculiar occasions, were needed. With the nation his popularity survived undiminished to the close of his life. This life, which was one of singular peace and outward prosperity, he brought to an end on Whit-Sunday, May 25, 1681, his years running exactly parallel to those of that century of which he was so illustrious an ornament. A little volume of funeral eulogies, published the same year by a gentleman belonging to the household of his patron and friend, the duke of Veraguas,* is almost utterly barren of any historical notices about him of the slightest value. The only two facts which can be gleaned from it are these: the first, that poor Charles II. shed tears at the announcement of his death, an act which the writer considers "not merely pardonable but praiseworthy," and which, whether true or only reported, seems to imply that his genius was in a measure still recognised even at the court; the other, that three thousand persons with torches attended his funeral. This, though it fell infinitely below the extraordinary solemnity and magnificence with which the obsequies of Lope de Vega were

* *Funebres Elogios*, Valencia, 1681.

celebrated half a century before, yet tells of no slight honor in which the nation held its greatest, as he was the last of its great, poets. He was buried in the parish church of San Salvador, at Madrid, and a magnificent monument (so Vera Tassis calls it), surmounted with his portrait, was raised over his remains.*

All notices which we have of Calderon from contemporaries are pleasant, and give us the impression of one who was loved, and who was worthy to be loved. In his old age he used to collect his friends round him on his birthdays, and tell them amusing stories of his earlier life.† Vera Tassis recounts the noblest names of Spain as in the list of his personal friends; nor does he fail to notice the signal absence of all gall from his pen—the entire freedom of his spirit from all sentiments of jealousy and envy. Cal-

* With some alterations which had taken place in this church about the middle of the last century, a time probably when Calderon's fame was at its nadir, all traces of the exact place where his remains were deposited, and of his tomb itself, had disappeared. However, in 1840, in pulling down the decayed cloister of San Salvador, a tomb was discovered under the walls of the vestry, whose inscription proved it to be his. His remains were transferred, with considerable pomp and solemnity, to the church of our Lady of Atocha, which may be regarded as a kind of national Pantheon. (*Foreign Quarterly Review*, April, 1841, p. 227.) It was, I suppose, upon this occasion, that Zorrilla's *Apoteósis de Don Pedro Calderon de la Barca*, Madrid, 1840, was published. I do not know anything of the other poems of Zorrilla, esteemed the best poet of modern Spain; but this, though evidencing some insight into the true character of Calderon's genius, is on the whole poor and feeble.

† *Prologue* to the *Obelisco Funebre.* I have never seen this rare volume, but take this and a former reference to it from Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature.*

deron's writings bear out this praise. All his allusions to those who might be accounted his rivals and competitors are honorable alike to him and to them. There were but two great authors, between whom and himself any rivalry could exist: the one certainly of more genial humor, of deeper and more universal gifts, Cervantes, who, dying in 1617, had passed from life's scene as Calderon was entering actively upon it; the other, Lope de Vega, probably on the whole his inferior, but occupying then, by right of prior possession, in the estimation of most, the highest seat in the Spanish Parnassus. There exist some pleasing lines of Calderon addressed to the latter, and he never misses an opportunity of paying a compliment to Cervantes. Indeed, he dramatized a portion of *Don Quixote*, although this work has not come down to us. If he indulges sometimes in a little playful raillery on the writings of his brother-dramatists, it is only of the same kind which from time to time he bestows on his own. That his hand and heart were largely open to the poorer and less successful brethren of the poetical guild, his biographer very distinctly assures us. But, of a multitude of other things which we should care to know, he has not informed us. If we would complete our image of the poet, it must be from the internal evidence of his writings. Of his outer life we know almost nothing more than has here been told.

2*

CHAPTER II.

THE GENIUS OF CALDERON.

(HIS PLAYS.)

THEY convey altogether a wrong impression of Calderon, who, willing to exalt and glorify him the more, isolate him wholly from his age — who pass over all its other worthies to magnify him only — presenting him to us not as one, the brightest indeed in a galaxy of lights, but as the sole particular star in the firmament of Spanish dramatic art. Those who derive their impression from the Schlegels, especially from Augustus, would conclude him to stand thus alone — to stand, if one might venture to employ the allusion, a poetical Melchisedec, without spiritual father, without spiritual mother, with nothing round him to explain or account for the circumstances of his greatness. But there are no such appearances in literature: great artists, poets, or painters, or others, always cluster; the conditions which produce one, produce many. They are not strewn, at nearly equable distances, through the life of a nation, but there are brief peri-

ods of great productiveness, with long intervals of comparative barrenness between; or it may be, as indeed was the case with Spain, the aloe-tree of a nation's literature blossoms but once.

And if this is true in other regions of art, above all will it be true in respect of the drama.* In this, when it deserves the name, a nation is uttering itself, what is nearest to its heart, what it has conceived there of life and life's mystery, and of a possible reconciliation between the world which now is and that ideal world after which it yearns; and the conditions of a people, which make a great outburst of the drama possible, make it also inevitable that this will utter itself, not by a single voice, but by many. Even Shakespeare himself, towering as he does immeasurably above all his compeers, is not a single, isolated peak, rising abruptly from the level plain, but one of a chain and cluster of mountain-summits; and his altitude, so far from being dwarfed and diminished, can only be rightly estimated when it is regarded in rela-

* Little more than a century covers the whole period intervening between the birth of Æschylus, B. C. 525, and the death of Euripides, B. C. 406. A period of almost exactly the same duration includes the birth of Lope, 1562, and the death of Calderon, 1681; while in our own drama the birth of Marlowe, 1565, and the death of Shirley, 1666, enclose a period considerably shorter, and one capable of a still further abridgment of nearly thirty years; for, although the last of the Elizabethan school of dramatists lived on to 1666, the Elizabethan drama itself may be said to have expired with the commencement of the Civil War, 1640.

tion with theirs. And if this is true even of him, it is much more so of Calderon, who by no means towers so pre-eminently, and out of the reach of all rivalry and competition, above his fellows. The greatest of all the Spanish dramatists, he is yet equalled and excelled in this point and in that by one and another; as by Lope in invention, by Tirso de Molina in exuberant and festive wit. Let us regard him, then, not as that monster which some would present him to us, but, with all his manifold gifts, still as the orderly birth of his age and nation; and, regarding him as such, proceed to consider what those gifts were, and what he accomplished with them.

When we seek to form an estimate of Calderon, it is, I think, in the first place impossible not to admire the immense range of history and fable which supplies him with the subject-matter for his art, and the entire ease and self-possession with which he moves through every province of his poetical domain; and this, even where he is not able to make perfectly good his claim to every portion of it. Thus he has several dramas of which the argument is drawn from the Old Testament, *The Locks of Absalom* being perhaps the noblest of these. Still more have to do with the heroic martyrdoms and other legends of Christian antiquity, the victories of the cross of Christ over all the fleshly and spiritual wickednesses of the ancient heathen world. To this theme, which is one almost undrawn

upon in our Elizabethan drama—Massinger's *Virgin Martyr* is the only example I remember—he returns continually, and he has elaborated these plays with peculiar care. Of these, *The Wonder-working Magician** is most celebrated; but others, as *The Joseph of Women*, *The Two Lovers of Heaven*, quite deserve to be placed on a level, if not indeed higher than it. A tender, pathetic grace is shed over this last, which gives it a peculiar charm. Then, too, he has occupied what one might venture to call the region of sacred mythology, as in *The Sibyl of the East*, in which the profound legends identifying the cross of Calvary and the tree of life are wrought up into a poem of surpassing beauty. In other of these not the Christian but the Romish poet is predominant, as in *The Purgatory of St. Patrick*, *the Devotion of the Cross*, *Daybreak in Copacabana*,† this last being the story of the first dawn of the faith in Peru. Whatever there may be in these of superstitious, or, as in one of them there is, of ethically revolting, none but a great poet could have composed them.

Then, further, his historic drama reaches down from the gray dawn of earliest story to the celebration of events which happened in his own day; it extends

* See Immermann's *Memorabilien*, b. ii., pp. 219–229.

† Translated by Schack, author of the admirable *Geschichte der dramatischen Literatur und Kunst in Spanien*, 3 Bände, Berlin, 1845, 1846, to which I am often indebted.

from *The Daughter of the Air*,* being the legend of Semiramis, and in Goethe's judgment his most glorious piece† (Goethe, however, seems only to have been familiar with those which had been translated into German), down to *The Siege of Breda*, alluded to already. Between these are dramas from Greek history, and from Roman. Of these, *The Great Zenobia* is the best; *The Arms of Beauty*, on the story of Coriolanus, and as poor as its name would indicate, the worst. Others are from Jewish, and a multitude from the history of modern Europe. Thus two at least from English annals: one, rather a poor one, on the institution of the order of the Garter; another, *The Schism of England*, which is his *Henry VIII.*, and, as may be supposed, written at a very different point of view from Shakespeare's.‡ It is chiefly curious as showing what was the popular estimate in Spain of the actors in our great religious reformation; and displays throughout an evident desire to spare the king, and to throw the guilt of his breach with the church on Anne Boleyn and Cardinal Wolsey. But the great majority of Calderon's historical dramas are

* See Immermann's *Memorabilien*, b. ii., pp. 247–271.

† Das herrlichste von Calderon's Stücken.

‡ It need only be observed that his main authority here is the book of Nicholas Sanders (" or *Slanders* rather," as Fuller has it), *De Origine ac Progressu Schismatis Anglicani*. A little essay on this drama (*Ueber Die Kirchentrennung von England, Schauspiel des Don Pedro Calderon*, Berlin, 1819) has been written by F. W. V. Schmidt, and is worth reading.

drawn, as was to be expected in a poet so intensely national, and appealing to so intensely national a feeling, from the annals of his own country. These have the immense advantage of being the embodiment, for the most part, of events already familiar to the popular mind. The heroes of Spanish romance and of Spanish history are here brought forward; and not the remoter names alone, but those of the century preceding—Isabella of Castile, Charles V., the Conquistadores, Philip II., Don John of Austria, Alva, Figueroa, and even some of those who were still living when he wrote. It is not easy to measure the effect which in their representation must have attended some of these. *The Steadfast Prince*, of which, however, the hero is not Spanish, but Portuguese, is the most celebrated among them.

Leaving the region of history, and in a world more purely and entirely ideal, Calderon has some exquisite mythological pieces, in which he does not, in Cowley's words, merely serve up "the cold meats of the ancients, new heated, and new set forth;" but the old classical story comes forth new-born in the romantic poetry of the modern world. So is it, for instance, in the exquisitely graceful and fanciful poem, *Echo and Narcissus;* but, above all, this is true where a Christian idea looks through the mythological symbolism, and informs it with its own life, as in *The Statue of Prometheus*, and in another founded on the well-

known legend of Cupid and Psyche. In general, however, it must be owned that these mythological are the weakest among his productions; being, many of them, evidently intended merely as vehicles for show and scenic splendor. They are the works of the poet of the Buen Retiro, the director of the court entertainments. We pass from these to romantic dramas, in which the poet occupies a fable-land altogether of his own creation, as in *Life's a Dream*, an analysis of which, with large translations, will be found in this volume; or draws on the later Greek romances, as in *Theagenes and Chariclea;* or on Boiardo and Ariosto; or, it may be, on the prose-tales of chivalry, as in *The Bridge of Mantible*, on which play Schlegel has bestowed the pains of translation. These form a not inconsiderable group.

Then, further, among his *Comedias*, which is the general title whereby all in Spain that is not either on the one side farce, on the other religious mystery, is called, he has many tragedies, which, by their effectual working on the springs of passion, assert their right to this serious name. Some of these might almost as fitly have been enumerated among his historic compositions. The Spanish drama moves too freely, too nearly resembles the free, spontaneous growths of Nature, to admit of any very easy or very rigorous classification. Like Nature, it continually defies and breaks through all artificial arrangements of its pro-

ductions, and one must be content to class those under one head which might as well, or nearly as well, be classed under another. Still, as in some of these compositions the tragic, in others the historic element is predominant, they may be arranged, even while they partake of both, according to this predominance. Among the noblest in this kind is *Jealousy the Greatest Monster;* it is the story of Herod and Mariamne, and a genuine fate-drama, of colossal grandeur in both the conception and execution. The tragedies of a Spaniard writing for Spaniards, which should turn on jealousy, might beforehand be expected to claim especial notice; and indeed Calderon has three or four others in this kind, of shuddering horror, in which the Spanish *pundonor* is pushed to its bloodiest excess, but the fearful power and immense effect of which it is impossible not to acknowledge. *The Physician of his own Honor* is one of these, but less horrible, and perhaps therefore more terrible, is another, noticeable likewise as a very masterpiece of construction, *For a Secret Wrong a Secret Revenge*, which is one of the very highest efforts of his genius.* Hallam, not denying but admitting freely its singular efficiency and power, has yet called it "an atrocious play;" but he seems to me to have missed the point which certainly mitigates its atrocity, namely, that the murdered wife

* It is translated into French by Damas Hinard, *Chefs d'œuvre du Théâtre Espagnol,* t. ii., pp. 157–213.

is so far guilty, that she is only waiting the opportunity to be so.

Another tragedy, but not of jealousy, *Love after Death*, is connected with the hopeless rising of the Moriscoes in the Alpujarras (1568–1570), one of whom is its hero. It is, for many reasons, worthy of note; among other, as showing how far Calderon could rise above national prejudices, and expend all the treasures of his genius in glorifying the heroic devotedness of a noble foe. *La Niña de Gomez Arias* is founded on one of the most popular of Spanish ballads. The scene in this, where Gomez Arias sells to the Moors the mistress of whom he has grown weary, and who now stands in his way, despite her entreaties and reproaches, I should accept as alone sufficient to decide the question whether the deepest springs of passion were his to open. It is nothing strange to hear that on one occasion a poor Spanish *alguazil*, who was serving as guard of honor on the stage, drew his sword, and rushed among the actors, determined that the outrage should not go on before his eyes. And seeing that Calderon's world seems sometimes to consist too exclusively of the higher classes, and just such of the lower as minister immediately to their pleasures or necessities — the hearty homeliness of England's greatest poets, as of Chaucer and Shakespeare, being only too rare in him — one must not pass over his painful but noble tragedy of

humble life, *The Mayor of Zalamea.** He has frequently been denied the faculty of drawing characters. Now, that his characters are sometimes deficient in

* We owe an admirable translation of this play to Mr. Fitzgerald. I shall have occasion to speak more of his translations hereafter. The speech of Isabella, the humble Lucretia of this tragedy, as she mourns over her mighty wrong, he characterizes as "almost the most elevated and purely beautiful piece of Calderon's poetry he knows; a speech (the beginning of it) worthy the Greek Antigone." As I believe that my readers, even those who do not read Spanish with facility, will yet be obliged for occasional quotations from the original, I will cite so much of this lament as probably Mr. F. alludes to:—

"Nunca amenezca á mis ojos
La luz hermosa del dia,
Porque á su nombre no tenga
Vergüenza yo de mí misma.
¡ O tú, de tantas estrellas
Primavera fugitiva,
No des lugar á la aurora,
Que tu azul campaña pisa,
Para que con risa y llanto
Borre tu apacible vista!
Y ya que ha de ser, que sea
Con llanto, mas no con risa.
¡ Detente, o mayor planeta,
Mas tiempo en la espuma fria
Del mar! ¡ Deja, que una vez
Dilate la noche esquiva
Su trémulo imperio; deja,
Que de tu deidad se diga,
Atenta á mis ruegos, que es
Voluntaria, y no precisa!
¿ Para qué quieres salir
A ver en la historia mia
La mas enorme maldad,
La mas fiera tiranía,
Que en venganza de los hombres
Quiere el cielo que se escriba?
Mas, ay de mi! que parece

strong individual delineation, is certainly true; but that it is not always so, this tragedy sufficiently attests. It is not here the peasant-judge alone who is distinctly marked, but almost every other of the *dramatis personæ* as well.

To all these must be added his comedies in our sense of the word, themselves a world of infinite variety, but one in which I must not linger. Ulrici, indeed, says that in comedy was Calderon's *forte;* "therein first his truly poetical genius unfolds its full strength."* I can not agree with him. These seem to me but the lighter play, as contrasted with the earnest toil, of his spirit. Moreover, while he was a master in the comedy of situation, the vein of his comic dialogue is often forced, and often flows scantily enough. He does not deal aways with humble life in perfect good faith; it is too often a sort of parody of his high life, itself a high life below-stairs. Their charm consists in the ideal grace and beauty in which they are steeped, the warm atmosphere of poetry and romance which he generally succeeds in diffusing over them. I can only indicate a few of the most celebrated, as *The Fairy Lady*,

Que es crueldad tu tiranía;
Pues desde que te he rogado,
Que te detuvieses, miran
Mis ojos tu faz hermosa
Descollarse por encima
De los montes."

* *Shakspeare und sein Verhältniss zu Calderon und Goethe,* Halle, 1839, p. 533.

which, variously transformed, has found a home in almost all lands; *The Jailer of Himself*, a finished piece of comedy, just playing on the verge of tragedy; *The Loud Secret*, and *The Scarf and the Flower*. Finally, we must add to these the *Autos*, or religious mysteries, of which there will be occasion to speak by-and-by, for they claim a separate consideration. Putting all together, we must confess that the reach and compass of that poetical world which Calderon sought to occupy, was not small.

To speak now of some of the technical merits of Calderon in dealing with his subject, after which it may be time to consider other matters which lie less on the surface. We observe, then, in him the completest mastery of his material; all is laid out to the best advantage, all is calculated and weighed beforehand. There are no after-thoughts, no changes of plan as the composition was growing under his hand, out of which the conclusion suits ill with the beginning; but, as one perceives on a second reading, glimpses of the last and preparations for it appear very often from the very first. Vast as is the cycle of his compositions—his dramas are more than one hundred and twenty, his *autos* more than seventy, being nearly two hundred in all, a number which would appear vaster still if there were not Lope at hand with his fifteen hundred to make Calderon's fertility appear almost like barrenness—there are no-

where in them any tokens of haste. All parts are fully and in the measure of their importance equably wrought out. Inequalities, of course, there will be, for every poet will at one time soar higher than at another; but there are nowhere to be found the evi dences of carelessness or haste. Several of his dramas, like more than one of Shakespeare's, have been laboriously recast and rewritten, so that we possess them in two shapes—in their earlier and immaturer, in their later and riper forms.

Nor, fruitful as his pen was, is it anything impossible that he should have bestowed on all his works that careful elaboration for which I have here given him credit. Almost all poets of a first-rate excellence, dramatic poets above all, have been nearly as remarkable for the quantity as the quality of their compositions; nor has the first injuriously affected the second. Witness the seventy dramas of Æschylus, the more than ninety of Euripides, the hundred and thirteen of Sophocles. And if we consider the few years during which Shakespeare wrote, his fruitfulness is not less extraordinary. The vein has been a large and a copious one, and has flowed freely forth, keeping itself free and clear by the very act of its constant ebullition. And the fact is very explicable: it is not so much that they have spoken, as their nation that has spoken by them.

And, in the instance before us, we should not leave

out of sight to how great an age the poet attained. His life, like that of Sophocles and of Goethe, was prolonged beyond his eightieth year. Not only was his life a long one, but it was a life singularly free from all outward disturbances; in this most unlike those of his great fellow-countrymen Lope and Cervantes. He did not write for his bread, as, with all his popularity, did the former; he was no shuttlecock of fortune, no wrestler with poverty as with an armed man, and that for barest life, as the immortal author of *Don Quixote*. It might have been better for him if he had known some of these conflicts; or perhaps, with his temperament, it might not. At all events, such were not assigned to him. The generosity of the monarch whom he served, the large incomings of the preferments which he held—these, even supposing that high literature was no better rewarded in his case than in that of many others, must have exempted him from all anxieties about money; indeed, he appears to have had a considerable property to bequeath at his death: and his whole life, with the exception of his campaigns in the Milanese and in Flanders, which can not have been lost time to him even in this respect, and his brief service in Catalonia, may very well have been dedicated entirely to the cultivation of his art.

Neither did he make for himself, as do so many to whom the perilous gifts of genius have been allotted,

those cares and disquietudes from which he had been graciously exempted from without. No one can doubt that to him was given a cheerful spirit, working joyously, and with no doubts nor misgivings, in that sphere which it found marked out for it. Doubtless that which the Schlegels affirm was true in respect of him: the world's riddle was solved for him, and solved in the light of faith. The answer which he had found, and which he offers to others, may be quite unsatisfying to them: it fully satisfied *him*. No one can contemplate the noble portrait occasionally prefixed to his works—the countenance so calm, so clear, so resolved, surmounted with the dome-like expanse of that meditative brow*—and not feel that to him, if to any, were given "the *serene* temples of the wise." And this lasted to the end. He was not of those too many poets, who only "do begin their lives in gladness;" it was gladness with him to the end. It was with him as with those mountain-summits, which, ever as they rise the higher, thrust themselves up into clearer and purer air; for we may distinctly mark, as his years advance, an increasing desire in him to withdraw himself from secular themes, to dedicate his genius wholly to the service of religion.†

* In a poem published immediately after his death, his eulogist celebrates, "de su rostro grave lo capaz de la frente." It is a countenance not without its resemblances to Shakespeare's, but wanting (and how great a want!) every indication of his humor.

† In his epitaph these words occur: "Quæ summo plausu vivens

Then, further, in every estimate of Calderon's merits his infinite dramatic tact and skill may well claim to be prominently urged. To some, indeed, he is *only* a playwright. Now, playwright no doubt he was—the most finished and accomplished, probably, that the world ever saw—understanding the mechanism of dramatic construction better than it has ever been understood by any other. It is no doubt in this sense, and having this merit in view, that Schiller has said of him: "This poet would have saved Goethe and myself from many mistakes if we had learned to know him earlier." At the same time we should entirely wrong Calderon if we merely gave him credit for a power of stage-effect, and not for this as subservient to the highest interest of art.

Let me illustrate, by a single instance, what I mean. I have already mentioned his *Locks of Absalom* as one of his finest plays founded on a scriptural subject. There is nothing in its kind grander than the scene in this, where Amnon is slain at the command of his brother Absalom. The marvellous skill with which this dreadful deed is prepared and brought about deserves the very highest admiration. With the interval of long years which had elapsed between this murder and the crime which it avenged, the utter absence

scripsit, moriens præscribendo despexit." None of his biographers, that I am aware of, have taken any notice of the words, or sought to measure how much they imply. Did he denounce, or wish the suppression of, his secular plays?

of all suspicion with which Amnon had accepted his brother's invitation, an inferior artist might, indeed certainly would, have so brought about the catastrophe as merely to have revolted the spectators with what would have seemed a cold-blooded fratricide. But Calderon, with rare skill, and in one of the noblest scenes which his theatre possesses, brings the spectator to the point at which he still feels that it is indeed evil punishing evil, the wicked being used as scourges of the wicked; but he is not so far removed from all sympathy with the deed as would altogether mar the effect.

The idyllic aspect of the whole scene of the sheep-shearing (2 Sam. xiii. 23), the pastoral quietness, the groups of simple shepherds and shepherdesses, form a contrast the most striking with the act of a terrible revenge which is presently to stain that green turf with blood. Tamar, ever since her wrong, has lived in deepest seclusion in this country-place of her brother's, "desolate in her brother Absalom's house," and moves like a dark shadow among the simple and joyous shepherdesses of the land; for the sin of Amnon shows itself also in this, that it has turned her whole soul, who was once gentle and loving, to bitterness, and hate, and the lust of revenge. The royal youths are assembled; they have brought with them the manners of the court, its freedom and its license, and do not fail to show that they have done so. Teuca, an

aged prophetess or hag, one hardly knows which, but in the secret of the blow which is about to fall, distributes different flowers to each—to Solomon, to Adonijah, to Absalom, to Amnon—to each with ambiguous words; and in each case the flower, with the words which accompany it, and the answer which it calls out, have something prophetic of the future fortunes of the receiver. There is for each, in all this, an unconscious prophecy of his own doom. The whole forms the most wonderful preparation for that which is about to be. The words which seem spoken at random, and which yet shall prove most literally true—the irony of fate, which unconsciously draws out of men's own lips the sentence of their doom—the first mutterings of those divine judgments which shall presently break in thunder over their heads—are all here.

Presently the banquet is announced, and the other guests go in. Ammon alone tarries behind. The same that he was of old, wanton and injurious, he has been taken with the shape and grace of one of these veiled shepherdesses, and will make near acquaintance with her. Her replies to his advances are abrupt, yet full of mysterious allusions to that which has been, to that which shall so shortly be, to the past outrage, to the coming revenge. Does she refuse to unveil at his request?—he will force her thereto. He is very fond of force, she answers. At last he

does forcibly remove her veil, and perceiving that it is Tamar, rushes out as from a Medusa's face with horror and dismay. "Ill beginning," he exclaims, "this banquet has had." "But it shall have a worse ending," she replies. How marvellous the art in this way to reproduce the feeling of the original outrage in the spectators, to revive in its strength the indignation against it which the long spaces of intervening time might else have weakened in great part. Amnon has scarcely gone out, when one cry, and then another, is heard within, for mercy from Amnon, of triumphant vengeance mingled with Tamar's name from Absalom. It is but the work of a moment—for no one knows better than Calderon when and where to precipitate the action—and the scene opens; the injurious Amnon lies dead across the tables with a bloody napkin thrown over him; Absalom stands triumphing above him; his sister takes her place by his side; while of the other guests some are flying, and others grouped in wildest confusion around. She had said in the moment of her agony, "I will cry to heaven." "Heaven answers late," he had scornfully replied. This was true, but though late it *had* answered still. There are scenes in Calderon equal to this; I know of none in which his genius shines *more* gloriously forth.

When Calderon wrote, that noble Castilian language, the stateliest of the daughters of the Latin,

not clipped and cut short like the hungry French, which devours so many of its syllables, not emasculated, like the Italian, nor eviscerated, like the Portuguese, was in its prime, perhaps just beginning to decline from it. Of this glorious tongue there is no greater master than he. There seems no bidding of his which it does not wait to fulfil; and he sometimes loves to display his mastery in it by *tours de force*, which are executed by him seemingly with the most perfect ease, and which give no sign of the difficulty which must have attended their accomplishment. He did not indeed wield the language at all periods of his life with equal felicity. Rich, ornate, and decorated, as his diction always is, if only there is anything to justify its being so, he did not in his youth altogether escape the *dulcia vitia* of the *estilo culto*, which was the fashion then; while in the works of his old age there is a certain re-appearance of early faults, and this without the fiery vigor of youth to excuse or conceal them; but take him at his best, and none can justly deny him this praise.

Let us seek in other matters to measure out to him the praise or the blame which are fairly his, to avoid the extravagances in either of which not a few have been guilty. The wealth and prodigality of Calderon's imagery has been often extolled and admired; and with justice; while yet, wealthy and prodigal as he appears to be, and no doubt is, at the same time

he is not quite *so* wealthy, nor yet of quite so unbounded a prodigality, as might at first sight appear. His almond-trees, his phœnixes, his "flowers which are the stars of earth," and "stars which are the flowers of heaven," recur somewhat too often. He squanders in the confidence that what he scatters abroad will presently come back again to his hands; seeing that what he has onced used, he will not therefore feel the slightest scruple in using a second time or a hundredth.

Nor does his repetition of himself confine itself to these matters merely external. His inner spiritual world, though a wide one, is not, like Shakespeare's, a universal one. It does not stretch itself in every direction, till it loses itself in the infinite. On the contrary, it has limits, and those very fixed and rigid ones, beyond which it never extends. Certain factors, love, honor, religion, never fail to produce the same results, and this with so fixed a recurrence, that one sometimes begins to be afraid lest the whole matter should sink into a mechanical contrivance; being almost tempted in moments of displeasure to liken his poetry to the shifting combinations of the kaleidoscope, which, ever as you turn it, yields only what you had seen already, however it may yield this, brought into new and surprising combinations. Thus when Goethe likens Calderon's plays to bullets or leaden soldiers cast all in the same mould, he ex-

presses this particular fault, and by a comparison which at first appears to be utterly contemptuous.* It must not however be so taken; for Goethe had a sincere admiration for Calderon, although always with certain restrictions, and setting himself against the extravagance of his German worshippers; of whom he complains that, instead of drinking in the spirit of Calderon, and nourishing themselves and their own art from his, they merely appropriated and reproduced his forms; or, as in another place he expresses it: "Unhappily we Germans set his tender side in relation with our weak. Of his true strength there is little apprehension among us."† With this agree other utterances of his, wherein he shows, but always with full honor to the poet, his jealousy of the Calderomania which was the fashion in his time, and of the questionable influence which it was exercising

* Riemer (*Mittheilungen über Goethe*, b. ii. p. 648): "Unendliche Productivität des Calderon, und Leichtigkeit des Gusses, wie wenn Mann Bleisoldaten oder Kugeln giesse." Compare a letter of Tieck's in Solger's *Nachgelassene Schriften*, b. i. p. 683: "Dieser Geist ist eine der sonderbarsten Erscheinungen: kaum eine Spur von der grossen Vernunft, die den Shakspeare so himmlisch und ächt human macht; nichts mehr von jener grossen Naivetät, die ich immer am Lope bewundern muss; aber dafür der durchgearbeiteste Manierist (im guten Sinn), den ich kenne." Compare p. 696: "Calderon ist ein vollendeter Manierist, und in seiner Manier gross und unverbesserlich."

† Riemer (*Mittheilungen über Goethe*, b. i. p. 649): "Leider werden wir Deutsche eben seine zarte Seite mit unseren schwachen in Rapport setzen. Von seiner wahren Starke ist noch wenig Begriff unter ans."

on the dramatic art of his country.* Thus on one occasion he does not hesitate to express himself in such language as the following: "How much of false Shakespeare and still more Calderon have brought upon us, the way in which these two great lights in the poetic heaven have become will o' the wisps for us, it will be for the historian of literature in the future time to record."†

But some, perhaps, who would allow to a poet the right to borrow freely from himself, and to repeat himself, would deny him the same liberty in respect of his neighbors. It must be confessed that Calderon often lays hands upon his neighbor's property; making large use of their labors who have gone before him, so large that it has been sometimes urged as a diminution of his own proper fame. But against how many poets of the foremost rank might the same charge be brought. Chaucer uses Gower as if he had been a hewer of wood and drawer of water for him. Whatever Shakespeare found ready to his hand, and promising to serve his turn, he entered upon it as his own rightful possession. It is not the amount of his predecessor's toils which a poet employs, but the proportion which this holds to that

* On this matter see Gervinus, *Gesch. der National Literatur*, b. v. p. 604.

‡ Goethe, *Sämmtliche Werke*, Paris, 1836, b. v. p. 62. In the same place he ascribes to the last, das bis zum Unwahren gesteigerte Talent.

which he has of his own, by which we must judge whether his position in the kingdom of art is affected thereby or not. He who knows that, if need were, he could produce as good, or better, of his own, enters fearlessly and without diminution to his own honors on the stored treasures of those who have gone before him. He has a great work to do; and all that will save him labor and time in the doing is welcome, not to his indolence, nor to any desire in him to array himself in other men's garments, and adorn himself with other men's plumes; but welcome as giving him freer scope and larger room for his own exertion. He is a plagiary, who has borrowed but once, if that one borrowing constitutes the whole of his wealth, and that which, being withdrawn from him, would leave him nothing. He is no plagiary, who has appropriated a thousand times, if these appropriations are still in entire subordination to his own native wealth. What free use was made, for example, by Milton, of all which he had ever read; but yet it would not leave him perceptibly poorer, if this all were recovered from him. In this matter of entering upon other men's labors, the liberty among poets is permitted to the rich, which is denied to the poor.

But this is not all. In truly creative periods of literature, when extensive regions are being added day by day to its empire, it is ever observable that

there are no such rigid and anxious lines of demarcation between mine and thine, as in more artificial and less genially productive epochs. It is not then as when every poet and poetaster counts that he has his own little domain of reputation to defend, his own little credit for originality to uphold. There is a large and liberal giving and taking, and this with leave or without leave, of which it is difficult at other times to form a conception. Whatever has been already done is felt to be more the common property of all, than the single possession of any one. The individual author falls out of sight in the general national mind of which he is the utterance and the voice. In that mind and from it he has found his inspiration, and whatever he has uttered belongs more to all than to one. He has thrown it into the common stock; and henceforth it is there for others to employ, for each who can justify his use, by improving upon it while he uses.

In another matter Calderon is less to be defended; I mean in a certain excess of the intellectual faculty in the disposition and carrying out his plots. They are calculated overmuch:* there is so accurate and premeditated a balancing of part against part, so fine

* It is impossible, therefore, that Voltaire could have more entirely missed the mark than he has done, when speaking of Calderon's drama, he has said, " C'est la nature abandonnée à ellee-même." The words are adopted in the article on Calderon in the *Biographie Universelle*.

and curious a dove-tailing, that, ingenious as it ever, marvellous as it sometimes is, still there is felt in it too much of calculation, too little of passion. It has degenerated sometimes into that which almost looks like trick. The symmetrical is attained, but attained by means which lie too plainly on the surface; it is the symmetry of artifice, which betrays itself at once as such; and not the latent symmetry, which, lying so much deeper, will often look like confusion and disorder at the first. Strange as it may sound, when compared to a frequent estimate of his poetical character, there are plays of Calderon which remind one of nothing so much as of a Dutch garden, where every alley has its alley corresponding, and every tree is nodding to its brother.

It was not indeed possible for him, arriving as he did at the latter end of a great burst of poetry, to be other than a self-conscious poet. This burst of poetry had now lasted so long, had produced so many poetical masterpieces which invited study, had enjoyed such ample time for reflecting upon itself, and upon the means by which its effects were brought about, that self-consciousness had become inevitable. Of many a great artist it is difficult to think that *he* knew, however *his genius* may have known, the methods by which he attained his glorious successes. It is impossible to believe this for a moment of Calderon. He knew them, and, as it sometimes seems to

one, knew tnem only too well. In fact he not merely concluded an era; but it would not be too much to affirm of him, that he hastened its conclusion; leaving as he did so little possible for those who came after. Every device and resource of his art, moral and material, had been pushed by him as far as it would go, had attained its very utmost limits. The rose of dramatic art in him was full blown, so fully blown, so near being overblown, that there remained nothing for its leaves but to fall. It would be altogether unjust to him to affirm that he corrupted the taste of his fellow-countrymen; but still he had accustomed them to such rich and gorgeous gratification at once of eye and ear, that those who came after found only two alternatives before them, in each of which the certainty of failure was for them equally bound up. Either, conscious of the inferiority of their genius, they might creep near the ground with low and timid flight—a course which the high-raised expectation of their hearers would not now endure; or else they might emulate his flight, when they became ridiculous, attempting that which only such genius as his could justify or carry through, their waxen wings miserably failing them so soon as they endeavored to soar into that empyrean region, where he had securely held his way. They chose for the most part this, the more ambitious course, but one in which their failure was the more signal. It has been

well observed, "His popularity hastened the fall of the drama, by quickening a vulgar appetite for the pleasures of the eye, and his example brought into vogue a class of pieces written for scene-painters and machinists which reached the height of absurdity in the pieces of Salvo and Ocampo a few years afterward. On the whole, the genius, modified by the fortune of Calderon, has been truly said to have given the drama the last advance of which it was capable, but at the same time to have placed it, by the means taken to this end, on a summit from which nothing but descent was possible in any direction."* "The poet stands," as Goethe has excellently well observed, "on the threshold of over-culture."

Nor can it be denied that it is sometimes possible to trace in his works the influences of that particular world in which he moved. We recognise the court-poet, the poet of the Buen Retiro; though not indeed to such an extent as seriously to affect his popular, universal character. He had strength enough to resist the baneful influences, the narrowing tendencies, which such a position, and the necessity of often preparing what would be acceptable to his royal and courtly hearers there, might easily have exerted upon him; nor does he desert seriously, nor for long, the broad popular basis on which alone a national drama

* *Athenæum*, November 26, 1853.

† Der Dichter steht an der Schwelle der Uebercultur.

can repose. Still it must be owned that he moves at times in an artificial, merely conventional world; and this his greatest admirers ought not to refuse to confess.*

It is true that this same familiarity with courts, and the life of courts, brought a certain compensation with it. How complete the self-possession of all his characters to which this accomplishment of self-possession would naturally belong. With what graceful ease, with what high-bred courtesy, they know ever how to say the right thing at the right time. What perfect gentlemen his youthful gallants are in their friendships, their quarrels, and their love-makings. Still Calderon was, beyond a doubt, exposed to a danger on this side, and one which he has not altogether escaped.

The injurious consequences of this position which he occupied, are also manifested in the occasional choice by him of subjects, which evidently attracted him not on account of their inward poetic worth, nor of any strong sympathy of his genius with them, but only or chiefly because of the ample room and opportunity for pompous spectacle and show which they afforded. In search of these the poet sometimes a

* Goethe (*Worke*, Paris, 1836, b. iii. p. 316): "Eine völlige Gleichstellung mit dem spanischen Theater kann ich nirgends billigen. Der herrliche Calderon hat so viel Conventionelles, dass einem redlichen Beobachter schwer wird, das grosse Talent des Dichters durch die Theateretiquette durchzuerkennen."

little wanders out of the true paths of a severer art, and consents to minister rather to the sense than to the spirit. The court claimed splendid festal pieces, giving room for startling effects, unlooked-for transformations, long-drawn processions, and he did not refuse to produce them. Yet I fancy that he sometimes labored here with no willing mind. In some of these, above all in some of his gorgeous mythological pieces, it will be evident, I think, to a close observer, that he felt his bondage, and found vent for a latent displeasure in a certain irony with which he treats his whole argument. The assumption of this ironical position in respect of his theme, is at other times wholly alien from him.

In these pompous shows Calderon had, and plainly felt that he had, the resources of the royal purse on which he might freely draw. The lengthened stage-directions, which in two or three cases accompany his grand spectacle-plays, involve the most complicated arrangements. A famous Italian machinist especially presided over this department; and the demands which the poet made upon him must have tasked his skill to the uttermost. The cost of adequately producing some of these scenic splendors must have been enormous. But, in truth, the prodigal expenditure of the court of Philip IV. upon its pride and its pleasure seems to have known no stint and no limits. One might suppose that it would have sometimes been a little re-

strained by a sense of shame. But no: the whole machine of state might be in danger of standing still, or breaking up, for lack of the most needful funds; armies in the Netherlands, long unpaid, might be in actual revolt, threatening to turn, or indeed turning, their arms against their employers; but the magnificent and ruinous splendors of the court appear never to have known diminution or abatement.

Now-and-then, too, in some of these courtly pieces, the poet glorifies his royal patron beyond the warrant of the truth. Yet here it will be only just to remember that in many accomplishments Philip IV. *was* eminent. What his merits as a poet were may be doubtful; but he certainly wrote his own language purely and well; he possessed considerable skill in painting; he was a graceful rider, was bold and fearless in the chase. Thus a very long and gorgeous passage occurs in *The Scarf and the Flower*, in which, after a magnificent description of the horse, the poet extols the horsemanship, of the king, and claims for him the foremost honors as the best and boldest rider of his time. This might seem a piece of egregious flattery; but when Calderon, anticipating this charge of adulation, puts it at the same time somewhat proudly from him, on the ground that in nothing he exceeded the truth,* he is quite borne out in this by contemporary

* "Que como este afecto sea
Verdad en mi, y no lisonja,
No importa que lo parezca."

authority. To appeal to the many equestrian pictures of Philip by Velasquez, in which he and his steed so well become one another, might not indeed of itself be sufficient, for the pencil of the painter might have flattered as well as the pen of the poet; but "we have it on the authority of the great master of equitation, the duke of Newcastle, that he was absolutely the best horseman in all Spain;"* while his skill and daring in the chase are in like measure raised above all doubt.

Calderon is, and probably will remain, the last great poet of Romanism. Saying this, I would not imply that there have not been since his time poets of considerable mark, who have been serious and earnest in their allegiance to the church of Rome; Filijaca and Manzoni would refute me, if I made any assertion of the kind; nor yet that there may not be such again; but he is, I am persuaded, the last great poet who will have found in the Roman catholic as distinguished from, and, alas! sometimes as contrasted with, the universally Christian, any portion of the motive powers of his poetry; who will so firmly believe in and live by this, that he shall be able in return to shed around it the glories of his own art. There will be abundance of ostentatiously Romanist art, poetical

* Stirling, *Velasquez and his Works*, p. 85, who refers to the treatise of the duke, *A New Method to dress Horses*, &c., p. 8.

and other. There will be many a scornful challenge: "See what we can believe—how much more than you, poor, unbelieving protestants! what sources of inspiration are open to us, which are for ever closed to you!" But that which the challengers produce will not for a moment impose on the discerning; and the artist, at bottom as incredulous in respect of his legend or his miracle as those whom he affects to despise, will be rewarded with hearers or spectators as incredulous as himself. But while I say this of Calderon, it must not be understood as implying that his inspirations were predominantly Romanist as distinguished from Christian. Whatever is universally Christian in him or in any other is for all time; and this, I am persuaded, despite of all that Southey, Sismondi, and others, have affirmed to the contrary, so far in him exceeds the distinctively Romanist, that he will hold his ground and maintain his place in the august synod of the great "heirs of memory," whose reputation is for all time: nay, at each reconsideration of his claims he is likely on the whole to take a higher and not a lower place than that which he occupied before. If, on some points, the orb of his fame must decrease, it will increase on others.

On some, it is true, it must decrease: he already suffers, and, as the great stream of faith and passion recedes farther from Rome, will suffer still more, from having committed himself so far to that which will

every day be more plainly overlived; and will by more be abandoned. There will thus be the need, in reading him, of large abatements and allowances. There will be that in him wherein an ever larger number of readers will sympathize coldly; there will be that wherein they will sympathize not at all; there will be that against which their whole moral soul and being will protest and revolt. Thus to say a word on this last point. What were that "*Pecca fortiter*," even supposing it meant, which it does not in the least, "*Sin strongly*, that so grace may abound"—what were that, as compared with Calderon's theology in his *Devotion of the Cross*—despite of all its perversity a wonderful and terrible drama, but the very sublime of antinomianism?* Its hero Eusebio, after various disorders, takes to the mountains, becomes in the end a robber, a murderer, and a ravisher. He has never, however, amid all his crimes, renounced his devotion to the cross, nor yet his confidence that on the ground of this he shall be ultimately saved, as accordingly in the end he is.†

* With this Tirso de Molina's *El Condenado por Desconfiado* deserves to be compared. There is an interesting analysis of this very remarkable play in Schack's *Gesch. d. Dramat. Literatur in Spanien*, book ii., pp. 602–606.

† It must not be supposed that Eusebios belong merely to the region of imagination. Fowell Buxton (see his *Memoirs*, 1848, p. 488) visited, in the prisons of Civita Vecchia, a famous Italian bandit, Gasparoni, who, having committed two hundred murders, had never yet committed one upon a Friday.

A thoughtful man must, I think, be often deeply struck with the immeasurable advantage for being the great poet of all humanity, of all ages and all people, which Shakespeare possessed in being a protestant. At the first blush of the matter there is a temptation to conclude otherwise; to think of him as at a disadvantage, shut out, as he thus was, from the rich mythology, the gorgeous symbolism, the manifold legend, and from many other sources of interest, which a poet of the Roman catholic church would command. But whatever losses might thereby be his, whatever springs and sources of poetry might be closed to him on this account, all this was countervailed by far greater gains. And if the loftiest poetry is not merely passion and imagination, but these moving in the sphere of highest truth, it could not have been otherwise. And these gains will every day be more evident. For thus nothing in him through the course of time becomes incredible, nothing is overlived. The tide of human faith and passion, which upbears so proudly the rich argosies that he has launched upon it, will never ebb, and leave them helplessly stranded on an abandoned shore, but will rather mount higher and higher still. Assuredly it is a weakness in Schiller, and one fitly rebuked in one of Mrs. Browning's noblest poems, that he should wail over the vanished "Gods of Hellas;" as though the extinction of faith in them had closed any springs of inspiration for the

world, or left it poorer in the materials of poetry than before. To regard the matter only from a poet's point of view, what can be so poetical as highest truth and reason? If poetry be anything but a brain-sick dream, to bewail the vanishing of aught which, even while we bewail, we know to have been wholly or partially untrue, is contradictory and idle. Are we not bound by every obligation to believe that, however appearances may seem otherwise, however severe, or stern, or even homely, it may show for a while, the truest will yet in the end prove the most beautiful, and therefore the most poetical, of all?

A comparison has been sometimes instituted between Calderon and Shakespeare, by friends of Calderon and by enemies—the friends as injudicious as the enemies unjust. Why can not he be taken for himself? Why thrust him into a comparison and competition from which he and every man must suffer? Why can not a rich, ornamental garden be beautiful, because a magnificent landscape is more beautiful still? With what reason can be demanded from him that which the clear, unclouded South, which a Romance language, which the Roman catholic religion, can never give? Nationality, language, faith, made him very different; and the same causes which have made the North of Europe the seat of the Reformation, the seat also of all the stronger thinking as well as the more earnest doing of modern Europe, have

contributed to make our English poet far greater than the Spanish—our greatest far greater than theirs. But set him beside any other of our Elizabethan dramatists, and although his merits and theirs are so disparate as scarcely to allow of comparison, yet, if such were made, he certainly would not suffer by it.

In one thing I can not help noting the immense superiority of Calderon, not merely over them, but the advantage which he has even over Shakespeare himself, who is an offender, though a very slight one compared with his contemporaries, in the point to which I allude. It is the entire absence of grossness, of indecency, of *double entendre*, from his plays. The morality which he inculcates may sometimes be questionable and more than questionable, but in this matter he is nearly or quite without reproach. The wit of his valets and waiting-women is sometimes forced and insipid enough, but he never seeks to spice it with indecency.* Speeches which, considering who they are that utter them, what lovely and pure-minded women, surprise us once or twice in Shakespeare almost as much as the red mouse leaping out of the fair girl's mouth surprised Faust, nowhere occur in him. It is honorable to a Spanish audience that they did not *demand* this unworthy condiment, as is sufficiently attested by Calderon's immense popularity; that they

* See some excellent remarks on this subject in an able article on Calderon in *Blackwood's Magazine*, December, 1839, p. 729.

could *bear* it, the comedies of Tirso de Molina abundantly prove.

It is only in consistency with the profounder thoughtfulness, the more introverted eye of the great English dramatist, that in him the action is subservient to the character, while in Calderon the character is subservient to the action. In Shakespeare you are more concerned with what his people *are*, in Calderon with what they *do*. Of course, this is not to be pushed on either side too far: Shakespeare often interests with his plots; to Calderon was by no means denied the power of drawing characters. Of the drama of Shakespeare it has been said: "The soul of man is the subject of its delineation; the action and the circumstances of the piece are entirely subordinate and subservient to the displaying of the passions and affections of the persons represented. The interest of the piece, though sometimes most skilfully maintained, is nevertheless a secondary object." When the same writer* goes on to say—"In the Spanish theatre it is exactly the reverse; the interest is everything, the characters comparatively are nothing"—this, having its truth, is yet too strongly put.

In Shakespeare, again, where everything is wonderful, there is yet perhaps nothing *more* wonderful than the way in which characters grow before our eyes, as the action of the drama proceeds. It is not merely

* *Quarterly Review*, vol. xxv., p. 3, *The Spanish Drama*.

that he gradually shows us more fully and from more various points of view what they are; but with the advance of the action his persons *are* different from what they were when it commenced; they are in process of *becoming*. As in actual life no character stands still, but all are changing, are either growing worse or better, so is it in the mimic life of his stage. You note, for instance, in his plays which have to do with our civil wars, the English barons growing worse and worse, more unscrupulous, more cruel, more treacherous, more vindictive at every step; the poet thus unobtrusively showing the hideous moral effects of such wars upon those who are engaged in them. Or, again, you see in Margaret of Anjou the forward flirt passing into the unfaithful wife, and the unfaithful wife into the cursing hag. Calderon is not wholly without this, but there is comparatively little of it in him. Goethe has observed this: in Calderon, he says, you have the hands of the clock as they are seen upon the dial-plate, but in Shakespeare all the inner works as well. Or more exactly to this point he has observed, in a piece of criticism on the Spanish poet, which, brief as it is, is the profoundest and most satisfying that has yet been written: "In Calderon you have the wine as the last artificial result of the grape, but expressed into the goblet, highly spiced and sweetened, and so given you to drink; but in Shakespeare you have the whole natural process of its ripening besides, and the

grapes themselves one by one for your enjoyment if you will."*

I must not leave the points of contact or opposition between Shakespeare's drama and Calderon's without a word or two on the names which they severally have given to their plays. It is not a great matter, nor yet altogether a small one, by what names a poet designates his productions; and it can not be but that many must have admired the poetical, the witty, the proverbial, the alliterative, the antithetic character of the titles of so many among Shakespeare's plays, no less than the music with which they often haunt the ear: thus, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—*All's Well that ends Well*—*Love's Labor's Lost*—*Measure for Measure*—the name itself being no unworthy herald of that which is to follow, and oftentimes summing it all up; and, though not revealing beforehand, yet afterward clearly declaring the intentions of the poet. Calderon also is singularly felicitous in his titles, and in them, I think, often reminds one of Shakespeare: they almost always possess a point; in their narrow com-

* "Shakspeare reicht uns die volle reife Traube vom Stock, wir mögen sie nun beliebig Beere für Beere geniessen, sie auspressen, keltern, als Most, als gegohrnen Wein kosten oder schlürfen, auf jede Weise sind wir erquickt. Bei Calderon dagegen ist dem Zuschauer, dessen Wahl und Wollen nichts überlassen; wir empfangen abgezogenen, höchst rectificirten Weingeist, mit manchen Spezereien geschärft, mit Sussigkeiten gemildert; wir müssen den Trank einnehmen, wie er ist, als schmackhaftes köstliches Reizmittel, oder ihn abweisen." Goethe is here reviewing a German translation of *The Daughter of the Air*. (*Werke*, Paris, 1836, b. v., p. 61.)

pass, poetry, and wit, and proverb, and antithesis, all by turns find room. They attract the reader, and rouse his curiosity,* containing oftentimes the true key to the poet's meaning. Let me adduce the following in proof: *Life's a Dream—The Two Lovers of Heaven—The Fairy Lady—The Loud Secret—Weep, Woman, and conquer—Beware of Still Waters—White Hands can not hurt—The Worst is not always True—Loved and Hated—The Jailer of Himself—Every One for Himself*—and it is the same with a vast number of others.†

* On the titles of Calderon's plays, as well as on other matters connected with the subject, there are some good observations in a little essay by Heiberg, *De Poëseos dramaticæ genere Hispanico, præsertim de Calderone Dissert. Inauguralis*, Hafniæ, 1817, p. 16.

† Let me adduce one other isolated point of contact in a note. The shrewd, sensible, worldly, and yet from time to time better than worldly, wisdom which Polonius bestows on his son, now going out into life, is familiar to all. I do not adduce what follows, spoken on exactly a like occasion, as its match; yet none, I think, can read this without being reminded of that, nor without acknowledging that this too was well and worthily said. It is the peasant-magistrate, the Mayor of Zalamea, in Calderon's play of the same name (see p. 41), who speaks; I avail myself of Mr. Fitzgerald's version: "By God's grace, boy, thou com'st of honorable if of humble stock; bear both in mind, so as neither to be daunted from trying to rise, nor puffed up so as to be sure to fall. How many have done away the memory of a defect by carrying themselves modestly; while others, again, have gotten a blemish only by being too proud of being born without one! There is a just humility that will maintain thine own dignity, and yet make thee insensible to many a rub that galls the proud spirit. Be courteous in thy manner, and liberal of thy purse; for 'tis the hand to the bonnet and in the pocket that make friends in this world; of which to gain one good, all the gold the sun breeds in India, or the universal sea sucks down, were a cheap purchase. Speak no evil of

women; I tell thee the meanest of them deserves our respect; for of women do not we all come? Quarrel with no one but with good cause; by the Lord, over and over again, when I see masters and schools of arms among us, I say to myself: 'This is not the thing we want at all, *How to fight*, but *Why to fight*—that is the lesson we want to learn. And I verily believe if but one master of the *Why to fight* advertised among us, he would carry off all the scholars.'"

CHAPTER III.

THE GENIUS OF CALDERON.

(HIS AUTOS.)

I HAVE spoken more than once of the admiration of Augustus Schlegel for Calderon. While he extends this admiration to all his works, he has reserved his most enthusiastic praise, the loftiest flights of his most passionate eloquence, for the setting out of the glories of his *autos*. In these he sees, and perhaps justly, the most signal evidences of the poet's genius, his truest title-deeds to immortality.* The passage, which occurs in the *Dramatic Lectures*, has been often and justly admired; although it must be confessed that, despite of all the pomp and magnificence of words

* Martin Panzano, an Aragonese priest settled in Italy, who about the middle of the last century wrote a brief work in defence of Spanish literature, which he thought unduly depreciated abroad, has expressed himself in the same language. Speaking of Calderon, he says (*De Hispanorum Literaturâ*, Turin, 1758, p. 75): "Certe inter primi subsellii poëtas clarissimum hunc virum adnumerandum, nemo unus qui ejus libros legerit inficiabitur; præsertim si acta quæ vulgo *sacramentalia* vocantur diligenter examinet; in quibus neque in inveniendo acumen, nec in disponendo ratio, neque in ornando aut venustas, aut nitor, aut majestas desiderabitur."

which he casts over his theme, the reader not otherwise instructed rises up having learned exceedingly little of what these are, or what in them deserves the praise which sounds to him so extravagant.

Auto, or Act, was a name given at the first to almost any kind of dramatic composition, but in the flourishing period of the Spanish drama was restricted to religious compositions; nor would it be given to all of these, but only to representations in which allegorical persons found place, and which were acted at certain chief festivals of the church. Like each other form of drama which Calderon made his own, it was already, when he arose, a national production, and one deeply rooted in the affections of the nation, as a Christian and still more as a Roman catholic people. He only carried to its highest perfection, and gave its crowning development to, a form of composition which had existed, though certainly in shapes very different from those which it assumed under his hands, almost as long as modern Spain had any literature whatever. For, with all its complex construction, it is yet legitimately descended from the rude medieval mysteries; sacred shows, in which, on certain chief festivals of the church, it was sought to teach the people through their eyes as well as through their ears the leading facts of Scripture history—above all, of the life of Christ and of his saints. "Miracle-plays" these were commonly called with us, and sometimes "mysteries"

—a name borrowed from the French, and in modern times generally supposed, but erroneously,* to have been given to them because they set forth the great *mysteries* of the faith.

We have, indeed, in these rude religious entertainments the germs of the modern drama; for, strange as it may sound to some, it is yet certain that the whole modern drama, not in Spain only, but throughout all Europe, grew up under the wing of the church, and only gradually detached itself from it.† Like the Greek drama, it was religious, and part of a religious service, at its commencement. The process of this its detachment is not very difficult to trace. At the first the church had availed herself gladly of that love of dramatic representation which is so marked a characteristic of all nations at certain epochs of their intellectual and social development; until, that is, it is killed, or rather its place supplied, by the abundance of books, and the widely-diffused power of reading. With rude and ignorant populations, needing to be instructed in the great facts of sacred history, inaccessible through books—craving excitements in the place of those with which their heathen religions once supplied them—needing to be weaned, if possible, from profane feasts, and songs, and dances, by better

* See p. 79.

† On this matter see Alt, *Theater und Kirche in ihrem gegenseitigen Verhältniss historisch dargestellt*, 8vo, Berlin, 1846.

entertainments—she did not disdain to avail herself of the help which in this quarter she found. The thing grew up, indeed, almost before she was aware, out of the desire vividly to set forth the great truths by which she was animated, the great facts of which she was the bearer. It is not too much to say that in the responses and antiphonies of her service, in the processions within the church and outside of it, in the change of persons and dresses during the service, in the alternation of the recitative (*dicere*), and the choir (*cantare*), in the scenic imitations of the cradle and all its accompaniments at Bethlehem—in this and much else of the same kind, there lay already the germs of the drama.

It is no place here to follow out the steps by which these germs were gradually unfolded, nor yet to trace the further steps by which, as was inevitable, various scandals and offences arose, which might well create a misgiving in respect of the prudence of allowing this to proceed any further. These sacred representations, begun in good faith and in simplicity, and as veritable *Biblia Pauperum* for a rude and ignorant people, after a while degenerated more and more into mere shows and spectacles, no helpers but hinderers to devotion; they were attended with a thousand inconveniences and unseemlinesses, as in the fact that the priests were at once the authors and actors,* the

* Though the word *mystery* is spelled as though it were connected with *mysterium* and μυστήριον, there can be no doubt that we derived

places of representation churches and cathedrals; and nowhere were they more fruitful of scandals than in Spain. Those who flocked to witness these spectacles after a while craved coarser excitements, and there were found some who were willing to provide for them these. Scurrile jests, profane songs, low buffooneries, forced their way into these compositions, and were often mixed up in the strangest manner with the very most sacred things of all. Thus in the evangelical history itself, the merchant who sold the spices to the holy women, the gardener for whom our blessed Lord was mistaken by the Magdelene, the host of the inn at Emmaus, all became fixed comic characters, and made untimely merriment for the spectators.

Many church rulers, among these Innocent III. deserves honorable mention, were very much in earnest that these scandals should cease. Council after council took the matter in hand; some absolutely prohibiting these spectacles; others giving to them a limited

the word from the French, and that in the French it is more accurately spelled *mistère* than *mystère*, being derived from *ministerium*, and having its name because the *ministri* Ecclesiæ conducted it. When at a later period these representations were employed, not merely for setting out the *facts* of the sacred history, but by aid of allegorical personages the *mysteries* of Christian theology, nothing lay nearer than to make the name significant of the intention, and to suppose that it was meant to be so. It is the same process of modifying the spelling, or even the shape, of a word under a wrongly-assumed etymology, which has occurred innumerable times, and is one of the most potent forces in the transformation of words.

toleration, and attempting to define exactly what kind of representations should be allowed within the sacred walls, and what forbidden. These limitations were eluded; things invariably returned presently to their old course; and thus toward the end of the sixteenth century, in 1565, it was in Spain found necessary definitively to prohibit clerks taking any share in these religious plays, or allowing them to go forward within the sacred precincts. A way was found, however, by which the people should not be absolutely deprived of what they so eagerly craved. A compromise was effected. The mysteries should still continue, but not any more conducted by the officers of the church, nor within the sacred walls, nor as a part of divine service; while yet at the same time the church did not disown them altogether, nor quite cut off their connection with herself. These plays still maintained their relation to certain great festivals; they were still performed at the bidding, and with the sanction of the ecclesiastical authorities; these also defraying their cost. Of the secular drama I am not speaking now—that went its own way; independent of the church; sometimes in opposition to, and opposed by it; as in Spain, where more than once all dramatic representations except directly religious were suspended for a considerable period—but of the religious, which thus was still related,*

* A curious result and evidence of this was that the *autos*, though acted in the broad daylight, and indeed in the open air, were always

though the bands which bound it were somewhat relaxed, to the church.

Lope de Vega took possession of this, as he did of every other form of national poetry, cultivating and carrying it far higher than he found it. He did much for it, but he left much also for his successors, Calderon above all, to do. The *auto*, as managed by him, fell very short in completeness, in depth and in beauty, of that which in Calderon's hands it afterward became. This last found in the distinctly religious drama that which met all the requirements of his soul. His two vocations of dramatist and priest were here at length reconciled in highest and most harmonious atonement, and from the finished excellence of these works in all their details he appears to have dedicated to them his utmost care, to have elaborated them with the diligence of a peculiar love. It ought to be mentioned that long before his time, the mystery or miracle play had in part given way to, had in part been blended with, the "morality;" which arose later, which had unfolded itself out of the mystery; but which differed from it in this re-

accompanied in the representation by an innumerable quantity of wax tapers. Thus in the inimitable *Travels into Spain*, by the Countess D'Aulnoy, which are for Spain in the latter half of the seventeenth century, what Ford and Barrow are for Spain in the nineteenth; describing her attendance at one of these, she says :—"It was an odd sight to see a prodigious number of flamboys lighted, while the sunbeams were ready to scorch you to death, and melted the very wax of which they were made."

spect, that while the other had always to do with actual persons of sacred or legendary history, in the morality allegorical persons, virtues, vices, and the like, appear on the scene, sometimes mingling with actual historic persons, in which case the composition shares in the nature of both, sometimes to the entire exclusion of such, in which case we have a morality pure and unmixed.

As a matter of art the morality was a considerable advance on the miracle play. In the latter the poet, if we may so call him, was entirely subjected to his story, which he set out exactly as he found it, in successive scenes, having little or no connection with one another; but in the morality there was no such scheme made ready to his hand; or rather no such power of doing without any scheme. He must invent, he must combine, he must reflect. Without this, it would be quite impossible for him to bring aught to the birth, which would satisfy even the very moderate claims which the hearers and spectators of the fifteenth century made upon the author.

In Calderon's *autos* the morality very much preponderates above the miracle play. In fact, none of them are properly this last. If we look among his compositions for the lineal descendants, though in high artistic forms, of this, we must find them in such *comedias* as *The Purgatory of St. Patrick*, or *The Wonder-working Magician*, mentioned already.

There are on the other hand many which are pure moralities, while perhaps in more allegorical and historical personages are mingled, though this mixture is not so repugnant to true taste, nor yet so unmanageable, as might at first appear—seeing that even the historic personages are for the most part typical or symbolic, as Moses for instance of the law, Adam of human nature, and thus with the rest.

Enough has been already said to make the reader understand that there can be nothing easier than to give a description of the Spanish *autos*, of Calderon's above all, which shall present them as merely and supremely ridiculous to as many as, except from the accounts thus rendered, are entirely unacquainted with them; and who consequently are wholly at the beck and mercy of the scorner. Thus the Countess D'Aulnoy describes the *autos* as "certain poor tragedies acted upon religious subjects;" pronounces one which she witnessed "the most impertinent piece I ever saw of this kind in all my life;" giving an outline of it, which, if we knew no more, would abundantly justify her judgment. She does not mention its name or author, but from her account it may perhaps have been *The Military Orders* of Calderon. Southey also in his *Omniana* and elsewhere* has not

* *Commonplace Book, Second series*, p. 253. Compare an almost incredible account of an *auto* which he witnessed, given by the Rev. Edward Clarke, in *Letters concerning the Spanish Nation, written at Madrid during the years* 1760 *and* 1761, pp. 103–105. London, 1763.

resisted the temptation of setting, which, as I have said is so easy, in a ridiculous light. He should not have given way to the temptation. Critics like Sismondi, who undertake to judge of poetry with all insight into anything deeper than its merest forms denied them, may give utterance to such judgments about the *autos*, as that which Sismondi has most naturally expressed; and if he had studied the whole seventy-two, instead of the single one which with a certain candor he allows is all that he actually has perused, his judgment would not have been different, probably his indignation against them would only have been roused to a higher pitch.* But to Southey, himself a poet, and not without audacities of his own, the beauty and grandeur of these poems ought not to have been entirely hidden.

Nothing, as I have said, is easier than to win a laugh against them, and nothing slighter or shallower than the laugh so won. One has indeed for this only to enumerate the ordinary *personnel* of these plays, which consists of such allegorical or metaphysical persons as the following: The World, Idolatry, Heresy, Apostacy, The Will, Thought, Faith, Hope, Charity, The Synagogue, The Four Elements, The Four Seasons, The Five Senses, Innocence, Grace, The Prince,

* Bouterwek (*History of Spanish Literature*, p. 372, Ross' translation), is not so scornful, but more inaccurate, dismissing them in about a dozen lines, and mentioning by name only one, *The Devotion of the Cross*, which is not an *auto* at all.

The Man, Lucifer; with many more of the same description, and certain Old Testament characters, most often these, Noah, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Job, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Daniel, Belshazzar; to these when we have added Orpheus, Perseus, Andromeda, Medusa, Psyche, the Sybils, with other names of the Greek mythology, we shall have the usual *dramatis personæ* of these religious plays. The bare enumeration is alone sufficient to present ample material of ridicule to one unable or unwilling to plant himself in a region of art altogether new, and alien from all those in which he may hitherto have moved.* But one who is able to plant himself there, and who cares to make closer acquaintance with these poems, will very soon be filled with quite other feelings, as this acquaintance increases.

He will be filled, I fear not to say, with an endless astonishment and admiration at the skill of the poet in conquering the almost unconquerable difficulties of his theme, at the power with which he masters and moulds the most heterogeneous materials, combining them and making them subservient to the purposes of his art, at the inexhaustible variety which he con-

* I am not aware that any attempt has yet been made to present a translation, or even analysis with occasional poetical renderings, of any one of the *autos* to the English reader. Even the Germans, who have translated a multitude of Calderon's other dramas, appear generally to have shrunk from these. Ten of them, excellently rendered by J. F. von Eichendorff, Stuttgart, 1846, 1853, are all that ever I have heard of.

trives, by aid of new combinations, to impart to materials which he may have been already compelled often to employ, at the transparent intention of his allegory, so that the inner spirit looks ever through the symbol, informs it with its own life, and leaves no doubt or hesitation about its meaning. Add to these merits the gorgeous poetic diction, wherein he clothes the flights of an imagination, for which nothing is too bold, which dares to reach all worlds; while, greatest triumph of all, he is able to impart even a dramatic interest to that which, whatever other merits it might acquire in its treatment, seemed in its very nature incapable of this merit. But so it is; he makes his reader to follow now, as no doubt the spectator did once, with liveliest interest the fortunes of his abstract persons. This he effects, partly by his consummate skill, which has not deserted him here, in preparing and bringing about his situations, but chiefly because these persons, abstract as they are, are yet representatives of great and abiding interests for man. It is in one shape or another man's struggle and his temptations, his fall and his rise again, with the wonders of redeeming love, which are set forth before our eyes.

For indeed it is the Christian poet, whom, in characterizing the *autos*, we are called primarily to contemplate; one finding his inspiration in the great mysteries of revelation and redemption. But while I say

this, I would not in the least keep out of sight that Calderon, a zealous Romanist, and that too after the Spanish fashion, writes earnestly as such; sometimes, therefore, in the interests of his church as distinct from, and opposite to, the interests of eternal truth. There are of these *autos* some which are so shot through with the threads of superstition and error, that these may be said to compose their main texture and woof; for instance one, but even poetically regarded a very poor one, *The Protestation of the Faith*, on the reconciliation of Queen Christina with the church of Rome. These, however, are few. The springs of his inspiration are not, more than any other man's, in the errors which he holds, but in the truth. And it is not too much to say of the greater number of these marvellous compositions that they are hymns of loftiest praise to redeeming Love, summonses to all things which have breath to praise the Lord; and he too that writes, writes as one that has seen Satan fall like lightning from heaven, and rejoices in spirit with his Lord.*

* Schack, in his admirable *History of Dramatic Literature and Art in Spain*, referred to already, keeps for the most part in the cooler region of prose, yet now-and-then puts on his singing-robes, and soars into empyreal regions, whither it is not easy to follow him. He does so in the following passage, in which he characterizes generally the best Spanish *autos*, but has evidently those of Calderon specially in his eye (b. ii., p. 398): "Wer zuerst in den Zauberkreis dieser Dichtungen eintritt, der fühlt sich von einem fremden Geiste angeweht, und erblickt einen anderen Himmel, der sich über eine andere Welt ausspannt. Es ist als ob dämonische Mächte uns in finsteren Sturme

There is nothing which Calderon loves better to set forth in these *autos* than the manner in which all creation served man in the time of his innocence, but turns upon him directly he has sinned; rebels against him, because he has rebelled against his Lord; and will only return to its obedience when he has returned to his own, which same is a very favorite

davontrügen; Schwindelerregende Tiefen des Denkens thun sich auf, wunderbar-räthselhafte Gestalten einsteigen der Finsterniss, und die dunkelrothe Flamme der Mystik leuchtet in den geheimnissvollen Born hinein, aus dem alle Dinge entspringen. Aber die Nebel zertheilen sich und man sieht sich über die Schranken des Irdischen hinaus, jenseits von Raum und Zeit, in das Reich des Unermesslichen und Ewigen gerissen. Hier verstummen alle Misstöne; bis hierher steigen die Stimmen der Menschenwelt nur wie feierliche Hymnen, von Orgelklängen getragen, empor. Ein riesiger Dom von geistiger Architektur nimmt uns auf, in dessen ehrfurchtgebietenden Hallen kein profaner Ton laut zu werden wagt; auf dem Altar thront, von magischem Licht umflossen, das Mysterium der Dreieinigkeit; ein Strahlenglanz, wie ihn irdische Sinne kaum zu ertragen vermögen, dringt hervor und umleuchtet die gewaltigen Säulenhallen mit einer wunderbaren Glorie. Hier sind alle Wesen in die Anschauung des Ewigen versenkt und blicken staunend in die unergrundlichen Tiefen der göttlichen Liebe. Die ganze Schöpfung stimmt in einen Jubelchor zur Verherrlichung des Urquells alles Lebens zusammen; selbst das Wesenlose redet und empfindet; das Todte gewinnt Sprache und den lebendigen Ausdruck des Gedankens; die Gestirne und Elemente, die Steine und Pflanzen zeigen Seele und Selbstbewusstsein; die verborgensten Gedanken und Gefühle der Menschen springen an's Licht; Himmel und Erde strahlen in symbolischer Verklärung. Auch abgesehen von dem tiefen inneren Gehalt dieser Dichtungen, muss der Glanz in der Ausführung des Einzelnen entzücken. Vielleicht in keinem ihrer anderen Werke haben die spanischen Dichter den poetischen Reichthum, über den sie, wie sonst Niemand, zu gebieten hatten, so concentrirt, wie hier. Es ist ein Farbenschmelz, ein Blüthenduft und ein Zauber des entzückendsten Wohllauts, der alle Sinne berauscht." — *Cf.*, b. iii., pp. 252–256.

thought with Augustine. Thus, in more than one of these mysteries, the human nature appears as a royal princess—all Nature, represented, it may be, by the Four Seasons, or the Four Elements, doing her willing service, and rendering to her freely, so long as she continues in her innocence and first state of good, homage, and obedience; laying at her feet all the choicest offerings that they have. So soon, however, as she has transgressed the commandment, they all rise up against her; or, attempting to console her, prove miserable comforters, only afflicting the more. This is very sublimely brought out in *The Poison and the Antidote*, in *The Cure and the Sickness*, and again in *The Painter of his own Dishonor*.*

The manner in which Calderon uses the Greek mythology is exceedingly interesting. He was gifted with an eye singularly open for the true religious ele-

* A portion of this last passage, though inferior in beauty to the other, may yet be detached with slighter loss from its context. The Human Nature, which was glorying just before in the homage of all creation, is describing the different and hostile bearing which everything, now that she sinned, puts on :—

"La Tierra tiembla, el Ayre me traspassa,
El Mar me anega, el Resplandor me abrasa.

Fatiga el Sol, al passo que lucía,
Media la Luna alumbra, que alumbraba,
El Ave me aflige, que me suspendía,
La Flor me hiere, que me lisonjeaba,
La Fiera, que obediente me seguia,
Me huye ligera, ò me resiste brava;
Y hasta esta Fuente, al verme fea, murmura
La poca edad que vive una hermosura."

ment which, however overlaid and debased, is yet to be detected in all inferior forms of religion. These religions were to him the vestibules through which the nations had been guided, till they reached the temple of the absolute religion, where God is worshipped in Christ. The reaching out and feeling after an unknown true, of which he detected something even in the sun-worship of the Peruvians,* he recognised far more distinctly in the more human, and therefore more divine, mythology and religion of ancient Greece. It may be that the genuine Castilian alienation from the Jew, which was not wanting in him, may in part have been at work when he extols, as he so often loves to do, the superior readiness of the Gentile world, as contrasted with the Jewish church, to receive the proffered salvation, its greater receptivity of the truth. But whether this may have had any share in the matter or not, it is a theme to which he is constantly in these *autos* recurring, and which he loves under the most various aspects to present. And generally he took a manifest delight in finding or making a deeper meaning for the legends and tales of the classical world — seeing in them the symbols and unconscious prophecies of Christian truth. He had no misgivings, therefore, but that these would yield themselves freely to be moulded by his hands. He felt that in employing them he would

* See his *Daybreak in Copacabana.*

not be drawing down the sacred into the region of the profane, but elevating that which had been profaned into its own proper region and place. These legends of heathen antiquity supply the allegorical substratum for several of his *autos*.* Now it is *The True God Pan*, or Perseus rescuing Andromeda, or Theseus destroying the Labyrinth, or Ulysses defying the enchantments of Circe, or the exquisite mythus of Cupid and Psyche. Each in turn supplies him with some new poetical aspect under which to contemplate the very highest truth of all.

But while with the freedom and boldness of a Christian poet, who feels that all things are his—that the inheritance on which he enters is as wide as the world itself—he does not shrink from turning these to his purposes, but makes them yield up their better meaning to him; his *autos* rest more often upon directly sacred foundations, very frequently on facts and personages of the Old Testament which are typical of the New. *The Brazen Serpent*, *Gideon's Fleece*, *The Sheaves of Ruth*, *Belshazzar's Feast*, *The First and Second Isaac*, *The Tree of the Choicest Fruit*, these

* There is an elaborate and interesting essay on this subject, and generally on the use which Calderon makes of the classical mythology, by Leopold Schmidt in the *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, 1855, pp. 315–317, under this title, *Ueber Calderon's Behandlung antiker Mythen;* interesting in itself, and also as showing that the interest in Calderon is still lively in Germany, and includes some of its classical scholars.

are the names of some, and names which will at once suggest their several arguments. Some, again, are the working out of New-Testament parables; such, for instance, as *The Vineyard of the Lord*, *The Wheat and the Tares*, *The Hid Treasure*. Others are founded on legends of the church, as *The Leprosy of Constantine;* while in others scriptural and ecclesiastical alike fall into the background, as in *The Great Theatre of the World*, *The World's Great Fair*, and he chooses a more purely ethical treatment of his subject. Several, again, are very curious, as being *doubles* of secular dramas of his own, generally with the same name which those bear, and intended to furnish a key to their inner intention. Thus, *Life's a Dream*, of which an analysis is given in this volume, has a duplicate bearing the same name among the *autos*, supplying many interesting points of comparison. It is exactly the same with another, *The Painter of his own Dishonor;* and *Andromeda and Perseus* is in like manner a twice-told tale. There are cases in which the name is different, but the argument is altogether the same; only that in the *auto* the treatment is directly religious, which in the secular drama it was not; thus *Love the Greatest Enchantment* is the story of Ulysses and Circe told in the one sense; *The Sorceries of Sin* is the same told in the other; but with most interesting and instructive cross-lights from the one to the other.

Very worthy of note in not a few of these plays is the skill with which Calderon turns to account and makes poetry of that which might be supposed at first a material the most stubbornly resisting and opposing itself to any such uses—as doubtless for an ordinary genius it would so prove—I mean the scholastic theology of the church. That it is not really such, that it can supply stuff which the loftiest poetry can find akin to and ministrant to itself, which it can work up homogeneously into its own texture and woof, this Dante had abundantly shown long ago; to the understanding of whose *Divine Comedy* no single book, after the Vulgate, has probably contributed gains so large as the *Summa Theologiæ* of Aquinas. Nor had Calderon made his studies for nothing in the scholastic theology at Salamanca. The subtleties of it are sometimes not wanting in his worldly plays, where their introduction can not always be justified; in his religious there is no such apparent unfitness, and he often makes admirable use of this scholastic theology in them; it does him excellent service there. Thus, when *The Man* supposes that he can suffer one only of the Virtues to withdraw from him, he all the while retaining the rest, and that one gives its hand to another, and that one to the next, until all forsake him who has willingly dismissed one, we have here the great scriptural truth that obedience is of the whole man; that he who is guilty of one is guilty of all;

that to drop one link in the golden chain of obedience is to leave it a chain no longer: but we have this truth under forms which that theology supplied.

In more than one of these *autos*, as in *The Sacred Year of Madrid*, he has a magnificent scene in which man, the pilgrim, is forgetting his pilgrim state, and would fain play the courtier at the great court of this world. The seven mortal Sins are arraying him and furnishing him forth, each with the several symbols of its enticement: Pride with hat and Feathers—Wantonness with a looking-glass—Avarice with a casket of jewels—Gluttony with a salver of fruits—Anger with a sword—Envy with a cloak and hood. Or, again, as in *The World's Great Fair*, an *auto* of rare depth and beauty, the man enters as a trader with his intrusted talent on the great market-place of the world, which is set out with all its enticing wares, with its false and its true, its shadows and its substances, its pebbles and its jewels, its unattractive sackcloth, its alluring purple; his Good and his Evil Genius, ever as he passes through the fair, severally suggesting to him that he should lay out his talent in making these or those his own.

Or, again, some tale of the old mythology, as that of Circe for instance, is used for illustrating the enticements and allurements of sin, the deep entanglements of the flesh—ever, indeed, with the most perfect purity; the divine tact of the poet shining out as

gloriously here as Milton's in his *Comus;* while yet these flatteries and falsehoods of the flesh have never been set forth with a more wondrous art. In most cases, the poems are triumphant hymns of a victory which at the last is gained over the world, and sin, and death. The man is saved; and even if he be entangled for a while, he is enabled by a better strength than his own to break away at last. And it is fit that it should most frequently be so; for these poems are intended to celebrate the mysteries *of redemption.* Yet it is not so always; even as these purposes of redemption are not always fulfilled, but sometimes baffled and defeated by the pride and obstinacy of man. Sometimes, as in that sublime *auto*, *Belshazzar's Feast*, all the resources of divine love are exhausted in vain, and the sinner perishes in despite of them all.

While thus in so many, man and man's trial and temptation occupy the foremost places of the drama, the interest revolving around him and turning on the final issues of his conflict, the Divine Helper only coming in to assist and to deliver; in others, *He* is the protagonist, and assumes the foremost place in the whole. Thus is it when He, as the Divine Orpheus, in the play bearing this name, goes down to hell to bring back his lost Eurydice; as Perseus slays the sea-monster, and unbinds the doomed Andromeda from the rock on which she had been exposed; or as Love delivers Psyche from all the consequences of her

fault, helps her to surmount her trials, and at length is united to her for ever.*

But I must not attempt to follow out any farther this portion of the subject. It would not be easy to exhaust all which, on the matter of these *autos*, suggests itself to be said; and I must be contented with offering to the reader, not otherwise informed, this slight and imperfect sketch of these strange and wonderful compositions, and with the intention to add to this the rapid analysis of one among them, before this volume is done.

* See an analyisis of this last in Southey's *Omniana*, vol. i., p. 128.

CHAPTER IV.

CALDERON IN ENGLAND.

The life of Calderon was so greatly prolonged that he touched, and was contemporary with, two entirely different periods of English dramatic literature. When he began to write, Shakespeare, indeed, was just dead; but Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ford and Shirley, were in, or had not as yet attained, their prime. All these, as indeed the whole generation of the Elizabethan dramatists, with the exception of Shirley, died out before our civil wars began; but Calderon, overliving these wars, lasted on into a wholly different epoch, that of the artificial stilted tragedy, and of the comedy, in all respects more discreditable still, of the Restoration.

There is no evidence that during the first of these periods any of Calderon's plays had found their way to England, or were imitated by English writers, or that his name had been so much as heard among us. The language, indeed, would have proved no barrier; on the contrary, a considerable number of our dramatic compositions belonging to this time are founded

on Spanish novels and romances; and there is abundant evidence that Spanish was during the latter half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century very widely known in England; indeed, far more familiar than it ever since has been. The wars in the Low Countries, in which so many of our countrymen served, the probabilities at one period of a match with Spain, the fact that Spanish was almost as serviceable, and scarcely less indispensable, at Brussels, at Milan, at Naples, and for a time at Vienna, not to speak of Lima and Mexico, than at Madrid itself, the many points of contact, friendly and hostile, of England with Spain for well nigh a century, all this had conduced to an extended knowledge of Spanish in England.* It was popular at

* The number of Spanish words in English (I do not mean to say they all belong to this period, yet certainly many of them do) are a signal evidence of a lively intercourse between the nations, and familiar acquaintance on our part with the language. Such are 'alcove,' 'alligator,' 'armada,' 'armadillo,' 'barricade,' 'buffalo,' 'cambist,' 'caprice' (the earlier spelling 'caprich' seems to indicate that we got the word from Spain, not from France or Italy), 'carbonado,' 'cargo,' 'cigar,' 'creole,' 'don,' 'duenna,' 'embargo,' 'flotilla,' 'gala,' 'grandee,' 'jennet,' 'mosquito,' 'mulatto,' 'negro,' 'olio,' 'palaver,' 'paragon,' 'platina,' 'parroquet,' 'punctilio,' 'renegado,' 'savannah,' 'sherry,' 'strappado,' 'tornado,' 'vanilla,' 'verandah.' To these may be added some which, having held their place awhile in the language, have now disappeared from it again. Such are 'quirpo' (cuerpo) a jacket fitting quite close to the body, 'quellio,' (cuello) a collar or ruff, 'flota,' the constant name for the yearly fleet from the Indies, 'matachin,' a sword-dance, 'privado,' a prince's favorite, one admitted into his privacy; 'reformado,' an officer for the present out of employment, but retaining his rank; 'alferez,' an ensign; none of

court. Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth were both excellent Spanish scholars. A passage in Howell's *Letters* would imply that at the time of Charles the First's visit to Madrid, his Spanish was imperfect; but at a later date, that is, in 1635, a Spanish play was acted by a Spanish company before him.* The statesmen and scholars of the time were rarely ignorant of the language. We might confidently presume Raleigh's acquaintance with it; but in his *Discovery of Guiana* and other writings there is abundant proof of this. We observe the same evidence of a familiar knowledge of Spanish on Lord Bacon's part in the Spanish proverbs which he quotes, and in the fine observation which occasionally he makes on a Spanish word.† It was among the many accomplishments of Archbishop Williams, who, when the Spanish match was pending, caused the English Liturgy to be translated under his own eye into Spanish.‡

The language, therefore, would have opposed no barrier; yet it is not till after the Restoration that any traces of acquaintance with Calderon on the part of English writers appear. Little or nothing, however, came of this acquaintance then; as the genius

which are of unfrequent occurrence in our literature of the seventeenth century.

* Collier, *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, 1831, vol. ii., p. 69.

† Thus on *desenvoltura* in his Essay *on Fortune*.

‡ Hacket's *Life of Archbishop Williams*, part i., p. 127. For proofs of Ben Jonson's Spanish, if there needed such, see *The Alchemist*, act iv., scenes i. and ii.

was wanting on the part of our playwrights to create poetry of their own, so was it wanting to profit by the creations of others. *Elvira* or *The worst not always true*, by the earl of Bristol, is a very poor recast of Calderon's comedy of the same name;* one from which all the grace and charm of the original have departed. Another piece in Dodsley's *Collection*, *The Adventures of Five Hours*, which one crown translated at the desire of Charles II., is a Spanish piece, but is not Calderon's, as is erroneously asserted in the preliminary remarks. Dryden's *Mock Astrologer*, which appeared in 1668,† is drawn directly from *Le Feint Astrologue* of the younger Corneille, but not without comparison on the English poet's part with Corneille's original, *El Astrologo Fingido* of Calderon. Dryden, in that same spirit of strange delusion which, in respect of the worth of his own and his contemporaries' dramatic compositions, seemed always to possess him, ventures on the following assertion, "I will be so vain to say, it has lost nothing in my hands" (p. 229). Never was poet more mistaken; it has lost the elegance, the fancy, everything which was worth retaining; its gains being only in ribaldry, *double-entendre*, and that sort of coarse impurity in which, unhappily, Dryden so much delight-

* See Dodsley's *Collection of Old Plays*, vol. xii., pp. 127–212 Its date is 1667.

† *Works* (Sir Walter Scott's edition), vol. iii., p. 207, sqq.

ed; a sort which fortunately in great part defeats itself, being very much more calculated to turn the stomach than to kindle the passions. His plays are, indeed, as a German critic has styled them, "incredibly bad," their moral tone and their art being about on an equality of badness, so that they appear, I confess, to me quite undeserving that toleration, and sometimes much more than toleration, which Sir Walter Scott has extended to them.

During the eighteenth century Calderon's name is, I should suppose, hardly mentioned, or only mentioned in the slightest and most inaccurate way, in English books. One comedy I am aware of, which the author announces as a translation* from him; but of no other point of contact between him and our English literature during the century. In fact, for a long period *Don Quixote* was supposed *to be* Spanish literature; and, as we esteemed, we had here not the *man unius libri*, but in a somewhat different sense, the *nation*. The Schlegels were the earliest to waken up any new interest about him. This they did first in Germany, and the same has since extended, though very faintly indeed, to England. They effected this, Augustus William by his *Spanish Theatre*, which, in fact, is a translation of five plays of Calderon;† by

* *'Tis well it's no worse,* London, 1770, from Calderon's *El Escondido y la Tapada.*

† Berlin, 1803–1809.

his *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*;* and Frederic by his *History of Ancient and Modern Literature*.† One of the first in England whose attentions was attracted to Calderon was Shelley, who, in one of his letters, with date December, 1819, preserved to us in Leigh Hunt's *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*, expresses himself thus: "Some of the ideal dramas of Calderon with which I have lately, and with inexpressible wonder and delight, become acquainted, are perpetually tempting me to throw over their perfect and glowing forms the gray veil of my own words."

Various articles have since appeared from time to time in our leading periodicals,‡ either seeking to take the measure of Calderon's genius, or presenting actual specimens of it, in more than one case entire dramas: and in this way, or in independent volumes. a considerable number of his plays have been made accessible to the English reader, who, however, has never been persuaded to take any lively interest in the literature thus brought within his reach. The deeper reasons of this indifference, the causes which will always hinder his finding any very cordial recep-

* Heidelberg, 1809–1811. † Vienna, 1815.

‡ As one in the *Quarterly Review*, April, 1821. This, with another in *Blackwood*, December, 1839, and a third in the *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly*, January, 1851, are, with one exception, of which I shall speak presently, the best general articles on Calderon of which I know; although none of them can be considered wholly satisfactory.

tion in England, I will not attempt to enter upon. They lie deep; and the best explanation of them I know is to be found in two masterly articles in *The Athenæum* on Calderon,* written with a more intimate knowledge of their subject that anything else with which in English I am acquainted.

Other difficulties which will hinder his obtaining a home among us, or admiration from those who do not read him in his own language, are more external, yet they are not less real. They respect the *forms* which translations from the Spanish theatre must assume, and involve practical questions which do not receive an easy solution. While one or two metres predominate in the Spanish drama, it claims for itself the right of unlimited variety; and there is, I believe, no metre which the language in other compositions has allowed and adopted, which does not find its occasional place here; even the sonnet itself is not excluded. At the same time the main staple and woof of the dialogue is the trochaic line of seven or eight syllables, in which the Spanish romances are written, and which may be called pre-eminently the national metre. This is constructed on a scheme altogether strange to our ears. One rhyme will run through the whole of a Spanish romance, or through some hundred lines of a Spanish play, recurring in every alternate line. But then this rhyme is not a full one,

* November 19 and 26, 1853.

like ours, where consonants and vowels must rhyme alike; but so long as the vowels rhyme, the consonants are free. Thus the *assonants*, as in Spanish they are called, to distinguish them from full or *consonant* rhymes, such as cr*u*z*a*n, j*u*nt*a*s, *u*n*a*, would be considered to rhyme with one another for the sake of the vowels *u—a* recurring in each word. It is as though we should allow "raiment," "angel," "greater," to rhyme on the ground of the recurring *a—e;* or "fire," "mine," "right" (for the rhymes are not always double), for the sake of the long *i* in each.*

For one who is deeply convinced of the intimate coherence between a poem's form and its spirit, and that one can not be altered without at the same time most seriously affecting the other, the metrical form of a great poem being not the garment which it wears, and which, as a garment, may be exchanged for another of a somewhat different pattern, but the flesh and blood which the inner soul of it has woven for itself, and which is a part of its own life for ever, for him there is no choice left in translating Calderon, but to endeavor to render the Spanish trochaic assonants into English lines of exactly the same construction. No English translator has hitherto attempted this. Yet seeming as it does to me one of the necessary condi-

* See a good account of the Spanish assonants and their origin in Lord Holland's *Lope de Vega*, vol. ii., pp. 215–222.

tions of a successful fulfilling of the task which he undertakes, I have not shrunk from the attempt. The thing itself is, indeed, not very difficult; at least it presents no difficulties which a fair amount of patience and labor, with a reasonable command over the resources of the language, will not overcome. But unfortunately when the task is accomplished, at least, with any such skill as I could command, the assonant, however it may sound in the Spanish, makes in English no satisfying music or melody to the ear.

No doubt the verses are better for this ghost and shadow of a rhyme than they would have been without it; and in the long run and in the total impression which a passage leaves behind it, the assonant certainly makes itself felt. Still there is a poverty about the English vowel rhyme to the English ear; which has not been trained to watch for it, and which for a long while fails to detect it. Add to this that so many English vowels being shut, while Spanish are mostly open, there is much less to mark the rhyme in English than in Spanish; not to say further that in every case of the double or feminine rhyme, the second vowel in English must be *e*, that is, the vowel with the slightest sound of all; words in *a—a*, as *a*g*a*te and p*a*l*a*ce, or *o—o*, as c*o*nc*o*rd and f*o*rem*o*st, or in any other combination but *a—e*, *e—e*, *i—e*, *o—e*, or *u—e*, being too unfrequent to allow of those assonants being chosen. Still it must be done in this

metre or not at all; and because it is so difficult to do it in this so as sufficiently to gratify the ear, therefore, I believe the attempt to render any Spanish drama in English can never be more than partially successful.*

Many translators, however, have not seen this necessity as I have seen it, and forsaking wholly or in part the metres of the original, have cast their translations into other metrical forms; it may be into our usual dramatic blank verse, or it may be into some form which shall be a compromise between this and that which they have not ventured to follow. They have thus bound themselves, as I can not but consider it, to a certain failure, abandoning the only principle of all true translation, which demands adherence to the form as well as to the essence of the original. They have generally fallen back on blank verse. But what could be more unlike one another than the slow and somewhat stately movement of our long dramatic

* Schlegel, Gries, and Malsburgh, Schack, Eichendorff, and all who have attempted to transfer the southern poets into the language of Germany, have invariably employed the assonant where they have found it in the originals. It is not *quite* so strange with them as with us, seeing that, although quite a modern invention, it has been occasionally used by German poets in compositions of their own, as by Frederic Schlegel in his *Alarcos*, and by Tieck in his *Octavian*. Yet there also it has found earnest resistance; the same charges have been brought against it to which it is evidently exposed with us; and it is very doubtful whether it has really established itself, whether it is there more than an exotic; not adopted, but only tolerated as a matter of necessity, in the rendering of Spanish or Portuguese poetry.

iambic, and the quick lyric flow of the Spanish asso nants, short trochaics of seven or eight syllables in length? while the portions of Calderon's plays written in full consonant rhymes, and they are very considerable, appear still less like themselves when stripped of their rich recurrence of similar sounds, their often curiously interlaced rhymes; when clothed throughout in this same uniform dress, with all the rhythmical distinctions between one part and another obliterated wholly. Shelley felt so strongly the fatal consequences of rendering those parts of his original which are thus steeped in the music of their rhymes into our blank verse, his poetic sense so far revolted against it, that, however he may have rendered the assonants in this, those parts at least he clothes in rhymes, irregular indeed, while the utmost regularity reigns in the original, but yet of a rare grace and beauty. For the most part, however, those who employ the blank verse employ it throughout; it passes like a heavy roller over all, leveling all, and often crushing all. It is almost impossible to conceive any greater transformation than that which Calderon thus undergoes, even where a translation fulfils in other respects all the conditions of such.

Other translators feeling this, have sought to evade the difficulty in another way. They have dealt with the full rhymed portions of the original as Shelley has done; this was obvious; but in respect of the Spanish

assonants they have taken a middle course; not rendering them into our blank verse, nor yet into English assonants; rather by a compromise they have thrown them into lines of equivalent length and accent, at the same time without attempting to reproduce the assonant or vowel rhyme. I can not consider the scheme otherwise than as wholly unsuccessful. Slight and faintly distinguished by the English ear as the assonant is, it is yet that which alone gives form and frame to these verses; and the short blank trochaics, deprived of this, can scarcely be said to be held in by any of those bonds and restraints which are the essence of verse, and in fact have neither the merits of verse nor of prose.

I see here not the entire, but quite a sufficient, explanation of the little popularity which Calderon has ever obtained in England, of the little which he is ever likely to obtain. The translator is in a manner shut in to failure; and this, even supposing him to be in other respects sufficiently equipped for the task which he has undertaken. Of course it will have happened with these translators, as with any other body of verse-writers, that some will have mistaken their powers, and will have manifestly been inadequately furnished with the technical skill which their task demanded; and their deficiency here has been itself quite enough to account for their ill success, without seeking the cause of it further. Yet this by

no means has been the case with all. Many have displayed abundant grace and poetry and feeling, with mastery of their own language and of that from which they were translating—even where they have not taken, as it seems to me, the best course in respect of the difficulties before them. Thus many years ago there was a series of well-written analyses of plays of Calderon, with large passages translated in *Blackwood's Magazine.* Others are scattered up and down in our periodical literature; thus a solid and scholarly, though not very poetical, translation of *Life's a Dream*, appeared in *The Monthly Magazine*, 1842, Nos. 549–551, and an analysis more recently in *Fraser's Magazine*, Aug. 1849, of *The Three greatest Prodigies.*

Probably the noble but unfinished fragments of *The Wonder-working Magician*, first published by Mrs. Shelley in the *Posthumous Poems* of her husband, which show that he did yield himself to the charm of these dramas, are that by which Calderon is known the best to the English reader.* They are, however,

* That we have here a poet translating a poet is plain: witness these lines describing a wreck :—

"As in contempt of the elemental rage,
A man comes forth in safety, while the ship's
Great form is in a watery eclipse,
Obliterated from the ocean's page,
And round its wreck the huge sea-monsters sit,
A horrid conclave, and the whistling wave
Is heaped over its carcass, like a grave."

too few and too fragmentary to afford more than a glimpse of that poet about whom Shelley spoke with so passionate an enthusiasm; and, probably, had they received the last touch of his hand, they would not have appeared altogether in their present shape. It may be permitted also to doubt whether Shelley was a very accurate Spanish scholar. *Justina*, by J. H., 1848, is another rendering of the same play. The writer appears unaware of Shelley's previous version of some of its scenes, and did not possess that command of the resources of the English language which none more than Calderon requires. *Six Dramas of Calderon, freely translated*, by Edward Fitzgerald, 1853, are far the most important and worthiest contribution to the knowledge of the Spanish poet which we have yet received. But, written as they are in English of an exquisite purity and vigor, and dealing with poetry in a poet's spirit, they yet suffer, as it seems to me, under serious drawbacks. Mr. Fitzgerald has chosen, and avows that he has chosen, plays which, with the exception of the noble *Mayor of Zalamea*, can hardly be said to rank among Calderon's greatest, being rather effective melodramas than works of highest art. He does this with the observation—"Such plays as the *Magico Prodigioso* and the *Vida es Sueño* require another translator, and, I think, form of translation." In respect of "form of translation" I am compelled to agree with him, his version being

for the most part in English blank verse; but how little likely Calderon is to obtain a more gifted translator, and how much his modest choice of plays on which to exercise his skill, which are not among his author's best, is to be regretted, I think the reader will own after a single quotation from this volume:—

"He who far off beholds another dancing,
Even one who dances best, and all the time
Hears not the music that he dances to,
Thinks him a madman, apprehending not
The law which moves his else eccentric action.
So he that's in himself insensible
Of love's sweet influence, misjudges him
Who moves according to love's melody:
And knowing not that all these sighs and tears,
Ejaculations and impatiences,
Are necessary changes of a measure
Which the divine musician plays, may call
The lover crazy, which he would not do,
Did he within his own heart hear the tune
Played by the great musician of the world."—p. 15.

There followed this in the same year another selection under the title, *Dramas of Calderon, translated from the Spanish*, by Denis Florence M'Carthy. The preface contains some very serviceable literary notices in respect of what has been already done for Calderon in England. The translations themselves are sometimes

meritorious, yet I can not consider them generally successful. In regard of the metrical scheme on which they rest, they furnish an example of that compromise between the demands of the original metre and the convenience of the translator with which just now I found fault. The short trochaic is for the most part preserved, but stripped of its assonants.

Thus far a critic of other men's attempts, I must now in turn expose to criticism my own.

TRANSLATIONS FROM CALDERON.

LIFE'S A DREAM,

AND

THE GREAT THEATRE OF THE WORLD.

I.

LIFE'S A DREAM.

"Life's a Dream" was first published in the year 1635. In that year the brother of the poet published, of course with his sanction, a volume containing nine of his dramas, being the earliest authorized edition of any of his works; and this occupies the foremost place among them. If we suppose it to have been written not very long before, and it is certainly not one of his youthful attempts, it will then pertain to that period of his life when his imaginative and creative faculties were at the highest; his deepest devotional feelings belong to a later period: it will also represent his diction at its best.

The inner meaning of this drama, and that which, elevating it above a mere tale of adventures, gives to it a higher significance, will hardly escape the thoughtful reader. Indeed, the very name which it bears will put at once "the key of knowledge" into his hands. The solemn sense of the nothingness of this life, as contrasted with the awful reality of eternity, has

often found its utterance under the image which this name at once suggests. That this life is only a dream, and eternity the waking, this has been often the theme of the earnest religious teacher; and many noble passages from Christian, and not Christian only, but heathen moralists, are the utterance of this truest thought. In this play of Calderon's we have the same thought finding its embodiment in the free region of art; its moral, although that is not forced upon the reader, being that this present life of ours, however it may be only such a dream, is yet one which it lies in our power to dream well or ill, and that, as our choice is for the one or for the other, even so will our awaking be:—

> "Sogno della mia vita è il corso intero;
> Deh tu, Signor, quando a destarmi arrivo,
> Fa ch'io trovi riposo in sen del Vero."

This truth, which in art has been often brought out on its comic, has been much seldomer on its more earnest side. The framework in which Shakespeare has set his *Taming of the Shrew* is, as is familiar to all, such a comic transfer of a drunken tinker in his sleep to a nobleman's palace; with doubtless the intention, which the poet has omitted to carry out, of bearing him back again to his rags and his alehouse so soon as the sport was exhausted, and suffering him to be-

lieve that all which he had seen and lived was only a dream; the play itself being subordinated to this scheme, and properly only an interlude acted before him. There is a still earlier drama printed in the *Six Old Plays*, dealing with the same subject; one also, as I have understood, *Jeppe paa Bierge*, by Holberg, the chief dramatic poet of Denmark. This drama of Calderon's, which deals with the more serious and solemn aspect of the same subject, has been a great favorite in Germany since the reawakened interest in Calderon. It has been acted with remarkable success, and three or four times translated into German. I am only acquainted with one of these translations,* that of Gries, which appears to me admirably done. As regards any English forerunners in my task, I have already alluded to a solid and vigorous translation of this play into English blank verse, which appeared in *The Monthly Magazine*, Nos.

* I do not count among these *Das Leben als ein Traum*, von D. F. H. W. M., Strassburg, 1750; the author of which does not seem to be aware that the play was originally Spanish. He has translated from an Italian translation, and the work, considering the double alembic which it has passed through, is not ill done; nor yet *Das menschliche Leben ist Traum*, von M. T. F. Scharfenstein, 1760, which also is an imitation at second hand. Neither is a play in Dutch, *Sigismundus Prinse van Polen, of Het Leeven is een Droom*, Amsterdam, 1705—a translation, though certainly founded upon Calderon. The same may be said of *Sigismond, duc de Varsau*, by Gillet de la Tissonerie, Paris, 1646. Boissy's *La vie est un Songe*, Paris, 1732, I know only by name. Damas Hinard has a faithful prose translation, in his *Chefs d'œuvre du Théâtre Espagnol*, t. i., pp. 318-374.

549–551, 1842, by John Oxenford; its metrical form, however, would not allow it to attain any great success. Some passages also from *Life's a Dream* appeared in a small, anonymous volume published in Edinburgh, 1830, but by one evidently litttle accustomed to overcome the technical difficulties of verse. I know not whether any other attempts have been made to introduce it to the English reader; save, indeed, that Mr. Hallam* has given a rapid account of the play, extending a certain toleration to it, and even bestowing upon it a qualified measure of approval.

The scene opens in a wild and savage region of Poland. Rosaura, in man's attire, appears descending from the heights above. She is following to the court of Poland Astolfo, duke of Muscovy; who, being engaged to her, and she only too far to him, is now seeking to wed Estrella his cousin, the niece, as he is the nephew, of Basilius, king of Poland. The king has no direct heir, and their rival claims being in this way reconciled, they will together succeed to his throne. She has lost her way in the mountain; her horse has broken from her, and she with her servant Clarin, the *gracioso* of the play, are wandering at random, when they are attracted by a light glimmering in a cavern. Drawing closer, they hear voices of lamentation, with the clank of chains. Having advanced too far to retreat, they are compelled to

* *Hist. of Literature*, vol. iii., pp. 534–537.

overhear one who mourns over a captivity which has reached back to the hour of his birth. But to begin where Rosaura first catches a glimpse of the light. Mr. Hallam himself observes of these opening scenes that "they are impressive and full of beauty, even now that we are become accustomed in excess to these theatrical wonders."

ROSAURA.

Did ever any such adventures meet!
Yet if mine eyesight suffers no deceit,
Which fancy plays on me,
By that faint glimmer day retains I see,
As I must needs believe,
A dwelling-place.

CLARIN.

Me too my hopes deceive,
Or I discern the same.

ROSAURA.

Amid these naked rocks the rugged frame
Peers of a lowly shed,
Timidly rearing toward the sun its head.
In such a rustic style
Shows the rude masonry of this wild pile,
That, at the bottom set
Of these tall, mountainous summits which have met
The sun's great orb of light,
It seems a loosened crag, rolled from the upper height.

CLARIN.

Let us approach it, then;
For long enough we have gazed upon it, when
'Twere better we should try
If the good folk within would generously
Admit us.

ROSAURA.

Lo! the door
(Funereal jaws were name to suit it more)
Yawns, and the night forlorn
Thence issues, as in that deep centre born.
[*A clank of chains is heard.*

CLARIN.

Hark! what is that I hear?

ROSAURA.

I am rooted to the spot, congealed with fear.

CLARIN.

Is't not the clank of chains?
Sure, we have here a galley-slave in pains!
Well did my fears say so.
[SIGISMUND *is discovered within, clothed in skins.*

SIGISMUND (*within*).

Ah, miserable me!—ah, wo, wo, wo!

ROSAURA.

List, what a doleful cry!
Clarin.

CLARIN.

What would you, lady?

ROSAURA.

Let us fly
The terrors strange of this enchanted tower.

CLARIN.

Nay, when it comes to this, I want the power.

ROSAURA.

Say, is not that a taper,
That feeble star, that weak and tremulous vapor,
Which, with its pale rays crowned,
And shedding ineffectual ardors round,
Makes with a dubious light
Yet darker this dark dwelling-place of Night?
Yes; for by that faint gleam
I can distinguish dimly what would seem
A prison-house obscure,
Which of a living corpse is sepulture:
And, to enhance my fear,
In skins of beasts a man doth there appear,
With fetters fastly tied,
And only by that light accompanied.
Since flight would not avail,
Let us from this listen to his sad tale,
And all his story know.

SIGISMUND.

Ah, miserable me! ah, wo, wo, wo!
Heavens, why make ye me to mourn,
More than all men else forlorn?
If my birth has been my sin,
Yet what sinned I more herein
Than others, who were also born?
Born the bird was, yet with gay
Gala vesture, beauty's dower,
Scarce it is a wingèd flower,
Or a richly-plumaged spray,
Ere the aerial halls of day
It divideth rapidly,
And no more will debtor be
To the nest it hastes to quit,
But, with more soul than it,
I am grudged its liberty.
And the beast was born, whose skin
Scarce those beauteous spots and bars,
Like to constellated stars,
Doth from its great Painter win,
Ere the instinct doth begin
Of its fierceness and its pride,
And its lair on every side
It has measured far and nigh,
While with better instinct I
Am its liberty denied.
Born the mute fish was also,

Child of ooze and ocean-weed;
Scarce a finny bark of speed
To the surface brought, and lo!
In vast circuits to and fro
Measures it on every side
All the waste of ocean wide,
Its illimitable home;
While, with greater will to roam,
I that freedom am denied.
Born the streamlet was, a snake,
Which unwinds the flowers among,
Silver serpent, that not long
May to them sweet music make,
Ere it quits the flowery brake,
Onward hastening to the sea
With majestic course and free,
Which the open plains supply;
While, with more life gifted, I
  Am denied its liberty.*

Those acquainted with the construction of Calderon's dramas will observe that he is here true to his ordinary plan of beginning with a scene which shall

* Calderon is so fond of introducing into his dramas persons who have been brought up in absolute solitude, and then are suddenly cast upon the world, and of dealing with the effects which are thus produced upon them, that it is not to be wondered at that several passages nearly resembling this, variations in fact upon it, are to be found in his other dramas — one, for example, and a very beautiful one, in the first act of *Echo and Narcissus*.

rouse curiosity; and only when he may have thus secured the spectators' attention, does he proceed to the orderly unfolding of his plot. An involuntary exclamation of Rosaura's makes the captive aware of the two that are so close to him. His first impulse, when he discovers that he has been overheard in the hour of his weakness, is to destroy the listeners, however unintentional and unavoidable their listening may have been. Rosaura casts herself at his feet, and obtains his grace. But this is hardly so, when they are interrupted by the entrance of Clotaldo, the most trusted servant of the Polish king, and the only person acquainted with the secret of this prisoner's condition, or with the causes of his lifelong captivity. Clotaldo summons the guards of the tower, and the intruders are borne away, despite of Sigismund's furious remonstrance and the passionate outbreaks of his rage. They have incurred the penalty of death, pronounced against any who should approach the place where this prisoner was confined.

We have in the next scene the court of the king of Poland. The aged monarch, in solemn assembly of the chief estates of the realm, declares to Astolfo and to Estrella the conditions under which the inheritance of the kingdom may devolve on them. He narrates at length his addiction in former years to the science of astrology; and how he had dived deeply into the mysteries of the future. Though counted childless,

he too had once a son; but reading at his birth his horoscope, he learned that this son should be fierce and ungovernable and cruel, and that he should himself one day lie prostrate at his feet. This son, whom he has feared to acknowledge, still lives—brought up in a remote tower, with only Clotaldo conscious of the secret. But now the father is touched with remorse, and repents of the cruelty with which he has sought to defeat the possible violence of his son. He will bring him forth, and make proof of his disposition. These prophecies of the stars do but announce the inclination; they can not impair the free will. Sigismund, for of course he and the captive of the first scene are the same, may overcome all the malignant influences of his stars; for men are not servile to their circumstances or their instincts, but it is their higher task to mould and fashion and conquer these. If he bear himself well in his trial, he shall be acknowledged as an heir; if otherwise, he shall be sent back to his dungeon, and Astolfo and Estrella shall inherit the kingdom. As now the secret is a secret no longer, and no motive for further concealment exists, the prisoners are easily pardoned; and Rosaura, who has resumed female attire, is taken into the train of Estrella. There is an underplot by which the latter becomes acquainted with Astolfo's previous engagement to Rosaura, which, graceful as it is, I yet shall not touch, as my purpose is only with the more

earnest side of this drama. It has its bearing on the ultimate issue, as in consequence of the discovery, Estrella breaks off her engagement with the duke.

ACT II.

In the first scene of this act Clotaldo declares to the king the manner in which he has carried out his purpose. In mercy to the young prince it has been determined by his father that he shall be brought to the palace while under the influence of a sleeping potion; so that, should he prove unworthy, being borne back to his dungeon under the power of another, he may be persuaded that all the pomp and glory with which he was surrounded for a brief moment was indeed only a dream which he dreamed. There is something fine in Clotaldo's account of the manner in which he carried out this part of his monarch's plans. The passage is in assonants in the original, and therefore in the translation. The assonants employed are *e—e*, the weakest, unfortunately of all our vowels; but the nearest possible approach which the language allows to the *e—a* of the original.

CLOTALDO.

All, as thou command'st it,
Has been happily effected.

KING.

Say, Clotaldo, how it passed.

CLOTALDO.

In this manner it succeeded.
With that mildly soothing draught,
Which thou badest should be tempered
With confections, mingling there
Of some herbs the influences,
Whose tyrannic strength and power,
And whose force that works in secret,
So the reason and discourse
Alienateth and suspendeth,
That it leaves the man who quaffs it
Than a human corpse no better,
And in deep sleep casting him
Robs him of his powers and senses—
With that potion in effect,
Where all opiates met together
In one draught, to Sigismund's
Narrow dungeon I descended.
There I spoke with him awhile
Of the human arts and letters,
Which the still and silent aspect
Of the mountains and the heavens
Him have taught—that school divine,
Where he has been long a learner,
And the voices of the birds
And the beasts has apprehended.
Then, that I might better raise
And exalt his spirit's temper

To the enterprise you aim at,
For my theme I took the fleetness
Of a soaring eagle proud,
Which, an overbold contemner
Of the lower paths of air,
To the sphere of fire ascended,
And like wingèd lightning there
Showed, or comet fiery-tressèd.
Then I hailed its lofty flight,
Saying, "Thou in truth art empress
Of the birds, 'tis therefore just
That thou be o'er all preferrèd."
But there was no need of more,
For if one of empire speaketh
But a word, with high-raised pride
Straightway he discourses ever;
For in truth his blood excites him,
That he fain would be the attempter
Of great things—and he exclaimed,
"In yon free and open heaven
Are there any then so base
That to serve they have consented?
Then when I consider, then
My misfortunes solace yield me:
For at least if I *am* subject,
Such I am by force, not freely,
Since I never to another
Of freewill myself would render."

When I saw him maddened thus
With these thoughts, the theme for ever
Of his griefs, I pledged him then
With the drugged cup; from the vessel
Scarcely did the potion pass
To his bosom, ere he rendered
All his senses up to sleep—
Through his veins and all his members
Running such an icy sweat,
That had I not known the secret
Of his feigned death, for his life
I in verity had trembled.

In this lethargy he has been borne to the palace, like those whom Marco Polo tells of, that in a like condition were carried into the gardens of the Old Man of the Mountain; he has been placed amid all the splendor and magnificence of his father's royal apartments; and now they are only waiting the moment of his awaking. There are tokens that this has arrived, and that he is approaching: the king and Clotaldo retire. Hardly have they done so, before Sigismund enters: servants are ministering to him, and he is full of wonder and admiration at the inexplicable change which has come over him; but, as will be seen presently, justifying all the provisions in respect of him; as, indeed, the king his father had taken effectual means that they should be fulfilled. The scene, which

is a long one, is yet full of dramatic spirit and vigor, and I will give its chiefest part.

SIGISMUND.

Help me, heaven, what do I see?
Help me, heaven, what things are here?
Filling me with little fear,
But with much perplexity?
I in sumptuous palaces,
Costliest hangings round me spread,
I with servants compassèd,
Gay and glittering as these!
On a couch so rich and rare
I to waken suddenly,
With this retinue to me
Offering royal robes to wear!
Dream to call it, were deceit,
For myself awake I know;
I am Sigismund—even so.
Heavens, let no delusion cheat
Me, but say what this may be,
That has overcome me, while
Sleep my senses did beguile:
Is it truth or phantasy?
But what profit to debate,
And this idle coil to keep?
Best the present joy to reap,
And the future leave to fate.

FIRST SERVANT.

What of sadness veils his brow!

SECOND SERVANT.

Who were not distraught, to whom
Should arrive such change of doom?

CLARIN.

I for one.

SECOND SERVANT.

Speak to him now.

FIRST SERVANT.

Wouldst thou they should sing again?

SIGISMUND.

Nó, their singing pleases not.

SECOND SERVANT.

As thou wert so wrapped in thought,
We had hoped to ease thy pain.

SIGISMUND.

Not with melodies like these
I my sadness can assuage;
Nothing did mine ear engage
But those martial harmonies.

Enter CLOTALDO.

CLOTALDO.

Let your highness, mighty lord,
First give me your hand to kiss:
I must not the honor miss
First this homage to afford.

SIGISMUND.

'T is Clotaldo! he who used
In my tower to treat me so;
Doth he now this homage show?
I am utterly confused!

CLOTALDO.

With the strange perplexity
Growing from thy new estate,
Unto many doubts and great
Reason might exposèd be;
But I gladly thee would spare,
If I might, them all — and so
I would give thee, sir, to know
Thou a prince art, Poland's heir.
And if until now thy state
Has been hidden and retired,
'T was that it was thus required
By the menaces of fate,
Which pronounced a thousand woes
To this empire, if in it

Should the sovràn laurel sit
Crowning thy imperial brows.
But relying on thine heed,
That thou wilt the stars o'ercome,
For not servile to his doom
Lives the valiant man indeed,
Thee from that thy cell forlorn,
While the might of deep sleep all
Thy wrapped senses did enthral,
They have to this palace borne.
But thy sire, the king my lord,
Will be here anon, and he
What is more will tell to thee.

SEGISMUND.

But thou villain, wretch abhorred,
If I do mine own self know,
Know I not enough?—what more
Need I to be told, my power
And my pride of place to show?
How didst thou to Poland dare
Act such treason, in despite
Of all reason and all right,
To me never to declare
What my birth was?—woe is thee!
Thus thou didst the state betray,
Flatterer to thy monarch play,
Cruel tyrant unto me.

Thus for wrongs so strange and rare
Thee the state, the king, and I,
Each and all condemn to die
By my hands.

SECOND SERVANT.

Sir—

SIGISMUND.

Let none dare
Hindrance in my way to throw:
'T is in vain: by heaven, I say,
If thou standest in my way,
From the window shalt thou go—

SECOND SERVANT.

Fly, Clotaldo.

CLOTALDO.

Woe is thee!
Sigismund, what pride thou showest,
Nor that thou art dreaming knowest.

[CLOTALDO *flies*.

SECOND SERVANT.

He did but—

SIGISMUND.

No words with me.

SECOND SERVANT.

With the king's commands comply.

SIGISMUND.

But in an unrighteous thing
He should not obey the king;
And besides, his prince am I.

Astolfo enters to pay his compliments in a set speech to the prince. Sigismund, however, cuts him short, and give him so haughty and insulting a reception that after some few angry words he withdraws. Estrella enters on the same errand, whose hand he seizes, and to whom he pays such violent compliments, that the same servant who was so forward before, and who knows that Astolfo is looking on at a little distance, interferes, and reminds Sigismund that it is not right so to behave to the affianced bride of another.

SIGISMUND.

All this causes me disgust;
Nothing appears right to me,
Being against my phantasy.

SECOND SERVANT.

But alone in what is just
By thyself I heard it said
It was fitting to obey.

SIGISMUND.

And you also heard me say

Who in me displeasure bred,
From the balcony should go.

SECOND SERVANT.

But that feat with such a one
As myself were scarcely done.

SIGISMUND.

That we very soon will know.

[*Seizes him, and they go out struggling; the rest follow. Enter* ASTOLFO.

ASTOLFO.

What do I to see arrive?

ESTRELLA.

Haste, if you his life can save.

SIGISMUND (*within*).

There, the sea may be his grave.

[*He re-enters.*

I could do it, as I live.

Enter the King.

KING.

What has been?

SIGISMUND.

Not anything.
A fellow that was vexing me
I tumbled from that balcony.

CLARIN.

Be aware; it is the king.

KING.

From thy coming, oh, my son,
Must a death so soon ensue?

SIGISMUND.

But he said I could not do
That which I have fairly done.

KING.

Prince, it brings me sorrow great,
When I hither did repair,
Thinking to have found thee ware,
Triumphing o'er stars and fate,
There has been such savage pride
Thus in thy demeanor seen,
That thy foremost act has been
A most grievous homicide.
With what feeling can I now
Round thy neck mine arms entwine,
Knowing the proud folds of thine
Have been taught so lately how
To give death? Who, drawing near,
Sees a dagger on the ground
Bare, that gave a mortal wound,
And can keep from feeling fear?
Or who sees the bloody spot

Where they slew another man,
And to nature's instinct can
Help replying, shuddering not?
I then, who in thine arms see
Of this death the instrument,
And the spot see, blood-besprent,
From thine arms am fain to flee,
And although I purposèd
For thy neck a fond embrace,
Will without it leave this place,
Having of thine arms just dread.

SIGISMUND.

Well—I can without it fare,
As I *have* fared until now.
For a father who to show
Harshness such as this could bear,
Me has like a wild beast bred,
Driven me wholly from his side,
And all nurture has denied,
Would have gladly seen me dead,
It import but little can
That he will not now bestow
His embrace, who robbed me so
Of my being as a man.

KING.

Oh that Heaven had thought it good
I had ne'er given that to thee!

Then thy pride I should not see,
Should not mourn thy savage mood.

SIGISMUND.

I should not of thee complain,
Hadst thou never given me it,
But that given, thou didst think fit
To resume thy gift again:
For though giving is well named
Deed that honor high doth bring,
Yet to give is meanest thing,
When the gift again is claimed.

KING.

These then are thy thanks to me,
That of poor and wretched thrall
Thou a prince art?

SIGISMUND.

What at all
Owe I here of thanks to thee,
O thou cruel tyrant hoar?
If thou old and doting art,
Dying, what dost thou impart?—
Aught that was not mine before?
Thou my father art and king;
Then doth nature's law to me
All this pomp and majesty
By its ordinances bring.

Though I am then in this case,
Owe I nothing to thine hand;
Rather might account demand
For the freedom and due place
Thou hast robbed me of till now.
Therefore rather thank thou me,
That I reckon not with thee,
While my debtor provest thou.

KING.

Arrogant and bold thou art;
To its word Heaven sets its seal:
To the same Heaven I appeal,
Oh thou proud and swollen of heart.
Though thyself thou now dost know,
Counting no delusion near,
Though thou dost in place appear
Where as foremost thou dost show,
Yet from me this counsel take
That thou act a gentler part,
For perchance thou dreaming art,
Though thou seemest thus awake. [*Exit.*

SIGISMUND.

That perhaps I dream, although
I unto myself may seem
Waking;—but I do not dream,
What I was and am I know;

And howe'er thou may'st repent,
Little help that yields thee now;
Know I now myself, and thou
With thy sorrow and lament
Canst not this annul, that I
Born am heir to Poland's crown.
If before time I bowed down
To my dungeon's misery,
'Twas that knowledge I had none
Of my state; but now I know
This, and mine own self also,
Man and beast combined in one.

Presently Rosaura enters in search of her mistress, and finds herself unawares in Sigismund's presence. They recognise one another with a mutual perplexity; he is taken with her beauty, and in this language expresses his admiration. I need hardly observe for the understanding the first compliment of the prince that estrella in Spanish is star.

SIGISMUND.

Fair woman, who art thou?

ROSAURA.

I must remain
To him unknown;—Sir, in Estrella's train
A most unhappy maid.

SIGISMUND.

Not so—the sun say rather, by whose aid
That star continues bright,
Since from thy rays it ever draws its light.
I in the kingdom sweet,
Where the fair squadrons of the garden meet,
The goddess rose have seen
Elected as the loveliest for their queen.
And 'mid the jewels fine,
The rich assemblage sparkling in the mine,
The diamond ruled as lord,
To whom, as brightest, empire all accord,
And in heaven's brilliant court,
Whither the senate of the stars resort,
I saw that Hesper owned
The chiefest station, royally enthroned.
And at the great sun's call
When the bright planets are assembled all,
He over all had sway,
And reigned the lordliest oracle of day.
Then how, if ever the *most* beauteous owns
First place 'mid planets, flowers, and stars, and stones,
Hast thou obeyed the less,
Who art in thy transcendent loveliness,
And showing fairest far,
At once sun, planet, diamond, rose and star?

In a little, however, Sigismund, leaving these high-

flown compliments, detains her so rudely, that Clotaldo, who has anxiously followed her into the prince's presence, is obliged to come forward and interfere for her release. The prince, enraged at the interruption, flings him at his feet, and a second time attempts his life. Rosaura runs out, crying for help, and Astolfo, summoned by her cries, seeks to protect the old man, when Sigismund turns upon him, and Astolfo is obliged to draw also to protect his life. The king, attracted by the tumult, enters, and again expostulates with his son. He answers upbraiding with upbraiding. Why should he have respect to the grey hairs of Clotaldo, when those of his father shall lie one day at his feet? With this defiance Sigismund goes out. It is now acknowledged by all that nothing can be done with him, but to replace him in his former dungeon once more. At the earliest opportunity, that is, when next he desires to drink, the second sleeping potion shall be given him. Yet here let me pause to observe that we should entirely miss the true point of view from which it was the poet's intention that we should regard his work, if all our sympathies were with the father, and against Sigismund. His resentment on account of his deprivation of all that humanizing culture which was his right as a man was neither unnatural nor unjust, little as he can be justified in his manner of displaying it. Feuerbach—not the atheist, but his father, an eminent

writer on criminal jurisprudence—has composed a memoir on Gaspar Hauser, whose actual history so much resembled that which Calderon has here imagined,* with this title, *Kaspar Hauser, Beispiel eines Verbrechens am Seelenleben.* Such an offence against the higher life had been here also committed, and it was only just that it should be avenged.

We must conclude that what had been agreed on has been done; for, in the next scene, Sigismund is again in his tower, clothed with skins and fastened with chains as before. The scene is a noble one: I can only hope that its beauty, especially that of its concluding soliloquy, has not wholly evaporated in the process of emptying from vessel to vessel. Clotaldo and servants, among whom is Clarin, have brought him thither.

CLOTALDO.

Lay your burden on this floor,
For to-day must end his pride,
Where it started.

SERVANT.

I have tied
His fetter as it was before.

* That is, supposing the whole account which he gave of himself was not an imposture, and the wound of which he died inflicted by his own hand. Feuerbach, however, a man little likely to be imposed on, was convinced of the truth of his story.

CLARIN.

Never, never any more
Waken, Sigismund, to see
Thy reverse of destiny:
Like a shadow with no stay,
Like a flame that dies away,
Vanishing thy majesty!

CLOTALDO.

One who such moralities
Makes, should never lack a place
Where he may have ample space
And leisure to discourse at ease:
This is he whom ye must seize—
Let him here continue bound.

CLARIN.

But me wherefore?

CLOTALDO.

When are found
Secrets grave to clarion known,
We guard it safe, lest they be blown,
If the clarion once should sound.

CLARIN.

But me—wherefore bind me thus?
At my father's life did I
Aim? or from that balcony

Did I, fierce and tyrannous,
Fling that little Icarus?

[*They take him away. Enter the* King *disguised.*

KING.

Clotaldo?

CLOTALDO.

Does your majesty
Thus in this disguise appear?

KING.

Foolish yearnings draw me here,
And a mournful wish to see
How it fares (ah, wo is me!)
With my son.

CLOTALDO.

Behold him shorn
Of his glory, and forlorn,
In his woful first estate.

KING.

Prince, alas, unfortunate,
Under stars malignant born!
Rouse him from his lethargy,
Now that all his strength has sunk
With the opiate that he drunk.

CLOTALDO.

He is slumbering restlessly,
And he speaks.

KING.

What dreameth he?
Let us listen.

SIGISMUND (*speaking in his sleep*).

What is this?
He a righteous ruler is,
Who the tyrants doth chastise.
By my hand Clotaldo dies,
And my feet my sire shall kiss.

CLOTALDO.

With my death he threatens me.

KING.

Me with outrage and with wrong.

CLOTALDO.

He means my life shall not be long.

KING.

Me at his feet he means to see.

SIGISMUND.

Let my valor proud and free
On the world's broad stage be found
With a peerless glory crowned:
That my vengeance full may be,
O'er his sire let all men see

Triumphing King Sigismund! [*He wakens.*
But, alas! where am I, where?

KING.

Me he must not look upon:
Thou wilt do what needs be done,
While I yonder will repair.
[*The* King *retires.*

SIGISMUND.

Can it be then I that bear,
Prisoned here, this fetter's weight?
I in this forlorn estate?
Yea, and is not this dark room,
Help me, Heaven! my former tomb?
I have dreamed strange things of late.

CLOTALDO.

I must now my station take,
And my part allotted play. [*Aside.*
It is time to wake, I say.

SIGISMUND.

Yea, time is it to awake.

CLOTALDO.

Wilt thou not this whole day break
Thy deep slumber? Is it so
That since I that eagle's slow

Flight pursued and path sublime,
Leaving you, that all this time
You have never wakened?

SIGISMUND.

No,
Nor yet now awake am I;
For Clotaldo, as it seems,
I am still involved in dreams;
Nor this deem I erringly,
For if that I *did* espy
Sure and certain, was a dream,
That I now see doth but seem.

CLOTALDO.

What your dream was might I know?

SIGISMUND.

I awoke from sleep, and lo!
'Twas upon a gorgeous bed
With bright colors picturèd,
(Oh, the cruel flattery!)
Rich as that flowered tapestry
Which on earth the spring has spread.
Many nobles in my sight
Humbly bending, gave me name
Of their prince, to serve me came
With rich jewels, vestments bright,
Till thou changedst to delight

That suspense which held me bound,
Uttering the joyful sound,
That though now I this way fare,
I was Poland's rightful heir.

CLOTALDO.

Welcome good I must have found.

SIGISMUND.

None so good—I drew my sword,
Thee a traitor fiercely named,
Twice to take thy life I aimed.

CLOTALDO.

How should I be so abhorred?

SIGISMUND.

I was then of all the lord,
And revenge on all I sought:
Only a woman in me wrought
Love, which was no dream I trow,
For all else has ended now—
This alone has ended not.

[*The* King *goes out.*

CLOTALDO.

He has moved the king to weep,
Who has from his post retired. [*Aside.*
Thou wert by our talk inspired

Of that eagle; thus thy sleep
Did the same lordly current keep:
Yet in dreams it were well done,
Sigismund, to honor one
Who has watched and loved thee so,
Since good does not perish, though
It be wrought in dream alone. [*Exit.*

SIGISMUND.

Truth—and let us then restrain
This the fierceness of our pride,
Lay this wilfulness aside,
Lest perchance we dream again:
And we shall so, who remain
In a world of wonder thrown,
Where to live and dream are one.
For experience tells me this,
Each is dreaming what he is,
Till the time his dream is done.
The king dreams himself a king,
And in this conceit he lives,
Lords it, high commandment gives,
Till his lent applause takes wing,
Death on light winds scattering,
Or converting (oh, sad fate!)
Into ashes all his state:
How can men so lust to reign,
When to waken them again

From their false dream Death doth wait?
And the rich man dreams no less
'Mid his wealth which brings more cares;
And the poor man dreams he bears
All his want and wretchedness;
Dreams, whom anxious thoughts oppress,
Dreams, who for high place contends,
Dreams, who injures and offends;
And though none are rightly ware,
All are dreaming that they are
In this life, until death ends.
I am dreaming I lie here,
Laden with this fetter's weight,
And I dreamed that I of late
Did in fairer sort appear.
What is life? a frenzy mere;
What is life? e'en that we deem;
A conceit, a shadow all,
And the greatest good is small:
Nothing is, but all doth seem—
Dreams within dreams, still we dream!

The Scene closes.

ACT III.

We have reached the third and concluding act. Sooner, perhaps, than Sigismund expected, he is to dream again. A great part of the army and the people, learning that there is a rightful heir to the throne, rise in insurrection against an arrangement which should give the crown to any other. They care nothing for the prophecy of the stars; and, finding their way to the place of Sigismund's confinement, burst into his dungeon, and demand that he should place himself at their head, and conquer for himself a throne. His perplexity at this new dream which he is summoned to dream is finely drawn; but Clotaldo's word of warning, that he have respect to the awakening, and the discipline which he has undergone, have not been wholly thrown away. To their loud and tumultuous homage—

> Long live Sigismund our king!

he answers:—

> Must I dream again of glories
> (Is your pleasure so, high Heavens?)
> Oh how soon to be dissolvèd!
> Will you that again encompassed
> With those phantom-shapes to mock me,
> I behold my kingly state
> Of the wind dispersed and broken?
> Must I my sad lesson learn

Once again?—again discover
To what perils mortal power
Lives its whole life long exposèd?
No, it shall not, shall not be:
To my destiny behold me
Subject now; and having learned
That this life a dream is wholly,
Hence I say, vain shapes, pretending
To possess a voice and body,
Cheating my dull sense, and having
In good truth nor one nor other!
I desire not borrowed greatness,*
Nor imaginary glories,
Pomps fantastical, illusions,
With the faintest breath that bloweth
Of the light wind perishing:
As the buds and bloom disclosèd
By the flowering almond-tree,

* These twelve lines which follow are so graceful in the original, that I must needs add them in a note:—

"Que no quiero magestades
Fingidas, pompas no quiero
Fantásticas, illusiones,
Que al soplo menos ligero
Del aura han de deshacerse,
Bien como el florido almendro,
Que por madrugar sus flores
Sin aviso y sin consejo,
Al primer soplo se apagan,
Marchitando y desluciendo
De sus rosados capillos
Belleza, luz y ornamento."

With such timeless haste unfolded,
That the first breath dims their brightness,
Tarnishing and staining wholly
All the light and loveliness
Which its roseate tresses boasted.
Now I know, I know ye now,
And I know there falls no other
Lot to every one that dreams;
Cheats avail with me no longer;
Undeceived, now know I surely
That our life a dream is only.

SOLDIER.

If thou thinkest we deceive thee,
Turn thine eyes that way, to yonder
Proud acclivity, and see
Multitudes that wait to offer
Homage unto thee.

SIGISMUND.

Already
I the same things have beholden
Just as clearly and distinctly
As at this time I behold them—
Yet was it a dream.

SOLDIER.

Sir, ever
Great events have sent before them

Their announcements: dreamt you this,
It was surely such an omen.

SIGISMUND.

'Tis well said; such omen was it.
Yet, since life so quickly closes,
Let us, even though this as false is,
Dream once more—this not forgotten,
That we must at fittest hour
Wake again, this brief joy over;
For that known, the undeception
Will not prove so sad nor costly.
Then, premising only this,
That this power, if true, belongeth
Not to us, but merely lent is,
To return unto its Owner,
Let us venture upon all.—
Vassals, my best thanks acknowledge
Your true fealty. Lo! in me
One whose valor and whose boldness
From a foreign yoke shall free you.
Sound to arms, and in brief moment
Ye my courage high shall witness:
I against my father boldly
Wage this battle, and the word
Will make true, which Heaven has spoken,
At my feet beholding him.
But lest this my dream be over,

That not done, best hold my peace,
Lest I prove an empty boaster.

ALL.

Long live Sigismund, our king!

Enter CLOTALDO.

CLOTALDO.

Ha! what noise? my life is forfeit.

SIGISMUND.

You, Clotaldo?

CLOTALDO.

Sire?—on me
Will his whole wrath fall.

CLARIN.

I wonder
If he'll fling him down the rocks.

CLOTALDO.

At your royal feet behold me,
That is to die, I know.

SIGISMUND.

Rise, my father—kneel no longer;
Rise to be the guide and pole-star
By the which I shape my projects;

For by your great loyalty
Was my helpless childhood fostered.
Give me your embrace.

CLOTALDO.

What say you?

SIGISMUND.

That I dream, and would act nobly,
Since well-doing is not lost,
Though it be in dreams done only.

CLOTALDO.

Then, sir, if it be your blazon
To do well, that I with boldness
Crave of you the same permission,
Can not for a fault be noted.
Arms you wield against your sire:
I can neither counsel offer,
Nor lend aid against my king.
See me prostrated before thee:
Kill me, if thou wilt.

SIGISMUND.

Ha, villain!
Ingrate!—but 'tis need I govern
And in meekness rule my soul,
For his true estate who knoweth?
To your loyalty, Clotaldo,

Owe I envy, praise, and wonder;
Go and serve your lord and king,
We shall meet in battle shortly.
But for you, now sound to arms.

CLOTALDO.

My best thanks this grace acknowledge.
[*Exit.*

SIGISMUND.

Destiny, we go to reign;
Wake I, let not sleep come o'er me;
Sleep I, do not waken me.
But well-doing most imports me,
Be it thus or thus—if truth,
For the truth's sake: if the other,
To win friends against the time
When this fleeting dream is over.
[*They go out, sounding alarums.*

Presently comes another struggle with temptation. Sigismund is advancing against the capital of his father, and Rosaura, at his approach, flees to him as her champion, who shall compel her faithless lover to do her right. Along with the temptation there goes also a new and deeper confusion, for she was one of the persons of his former dream. He discourses thus:

Help me, Heaven, that I may learn
From these doubts to issue wholly,

Or not muse on them at all.
Who has known such doubtful torments?
If I dreamt that majesty
Whereof lately I was owner,
How doth now this woman give me
Of that time such certain tokens?
Then it was a truth, no dream;
But if truth, which is another
And no less perplexity,
How do my life's following courses
Name it dream? then so resembling
Unto dreams are this world's glories,
It will happen many times
That the true for false are holden,
And the false accounted true—
These so little from those other
Differing, that 'tis hard to know
If what felt is and beholden
Be a falsehood, be a truth:
To the original the copy
So resembles, that a question
Which the true is rises often.
Then if this be thus, and all
Of our majesty and glory,
Of our pomp, and pride, and greatness,
Must in shadows vanish wholly,
Let us hasten to improve
What is ours, this present moment.

Let us snatch a present joy,
While a dream no future knoweth.
In my power Rosaura is,
And my soul her charms adoreth:
Let me seize, then, this occasion
Which unto my feet has borne her.
This a dream is; then delights
Let us dream of for the moment,
Pain will track them swiftly after.
But I do confute mine own self
With the reasons I advance.
If a dream, an empty glory,
Who for empty glory here
Would a heavenly glory forfeit?
What past good is not a dream?
Who has tasted blisses lofty,
And says not, whenever these are
In his memory revolvèd,
Doubtless I have dreamed it all,
Which I saw: but if my knowledge
Tells me this, and if desire
Is a flame that brightly gloweth,
Yet is turned to dead, cold ashes
By the wind that breathes the softest,
Let us, then, the eternal aim at—
Fame that no decreases offers,
Blisses that not ever slumber,
Majesty that ne'er reposes.

He breaks off the dangerous interview, and bids sound to arms. Presently the armies join battle, and the old king is overthrown, and his routed army scattered in confused flight. The poor *gracioso*, Clarin, has now a tragic part assigned to him, and one very characteristic of Calderon's skill in making all parts of his drama work together for one effect. He conceals himself among the rocks, in a place, as he boasts, of such entire security, that no danger can possibly find him out. The king presently appears, with Astolfo and others, also flying; shots are fired from behind, and the poor clown drops from his place of concealment, mortally wounded, at the king's feet. To the question, "Who is he?" he has strength to reply that he is one who, seeking to avoid death, has found it; who has fulfilled in himself that destiny which he thought most certainly to defeat, and this by the very means which he took to defeat it. The lesson is not thrown away upon the king. The pursuers are upon him and his company. They enter, Sigismund and his troops. After a momentary attempt at concealment, the king comes forth from his hiding-place, throws himself at his son's feet, and the menace of the stars is accomplished—here, also, by the very means employed to defeat it. Let us see how Calderon manages this concluding scene:—

SOLDIER.

In this intricate wilderness,

Somewhere in its thickest tangles,
The king hides himself.

SIGISMUND.

Pursue him,
Till not one bush has remainèd
Which you have not thoroughly searchèd,
All its trunks and all its branches.

CLOTALDO.

Fly, sir!

KING.

Wherefore should I fly?

ASTOLFO.

Sire, what mean you?

KING.

Prince, unhand me!

CLOTALDO.

What, sir, would you?

KING.

Use, Clotaldo,
That sole help which yet avails me.—
Prince, if thou art seeking me,
At thy feet behold me fallen.
Let the snow of these white hairs

Serve unto thee as a carpet;
Set thy foot upon my neck,
On my crown—my glory trample.
Serve thyself of me thy captive,
And, all cares and cautions baffled,
Let the stars fulfil their threatenings,
Heaven accomplish what is fated.

SIGISMUND.

Princes, nobles, court of Poland,
Who of these unequalled marvels
Are the witnesses, your prince
Speaks unto you—therefore hearken!
That which is of Heaven determined,
That which on its azure tablets
God has with his finger written—
Who those broad and skiey pages,
Pranked with all their golden ciphers,
Makes his solemn scroll and parchment—
That doth never falsely play:
It is he alone plays falsely,
Who, injuriously to use them,
Their hid mysteries unravels.
Thus my father, who is here,
That he might escape the madness
Of my nature, did for this
In man's shape a wild beast make me,
In such fashion that when I,

By the gentle blood that races
In my veins, my noble state,
By such nurture as became me,
Might, of good hope, have approved me
Mild and docile; yet that manner
Of my wild and savage rearing
Was alone sufficient amply
To have brutalized my soul.
Oh, fair way to shun the danger!
Were it to a man fore-uttered,
"Some inhuman beast will slay thee,"
Would he choose, such prophecy
That he might defeat, to waken
Beasts that he perchance found sleeping?
Were it said—"The sword thou bearest
Sheathed, shall prove the very one
Which shall be thy death"—O vainest
Method to annul the threat,
From that hour to bear it naked,
With its point against his bosom!
Were it said—"The gulfs of water,
Building silver tombs above thee,
For thy sepulchre are fated"—
'Twere ill done to brave the wild waves,
When the indignant sea in anger
Lifted hills of snowy foam,
Mountainous heights of crystal raisèd.
With my sire the same thing fortuned,

As with one who should awaken
The wild beast that threatened him;
As with one who bared the dagger
He most feared, or, to sea-tomb
Doomed, the stormiest oceans challenged.
When my fury might have proved
Like a sleeping beast (now hearken),
And my fierceness a sheathèd sword,
And my pride a tranquil calmness,
Yet no destiny by wrong
Or unrighteousness is baffled—
Rather these do more provoke it:
So that he who means to master
Fate, with gentleness must do it,
With meek wisdom, not with harshness.
Let for an example serve
This rare spectacle, this strangest
Prodigy, most wonderful
Sight of all; for what were stranger
Than to have arrivèd to see
After such preventions taken,
At my feet a father prostrate,
In the dust a monarch fallen?
'Twas the sentence of high Heaven,
Which, for all he strove to baffle,
Yet he could not; and could I,
Less in all things, hope to master,
Less in valor, and in years,

And in wisdom?—O my father,
Thy hand reach me; sire, arise:
Now that Heaven this way has made thee
See thou erredst in the mode
Of o'ercoming it, I place me
Here, awaiting thy revenge:
On my neck thy feet be planted.

He throws himself at his father's feet, having now, indeed, conquered; for he has conquered himself. All else is arranged in a few lines. Astolfo fulfils his pledge to Rosaura, the prince affectionately embraces the faithful Clotaldo, gives his own hand to Estrella, and, when all are wondering at his wisdom and moderation, forbids them to restrain their admiration, even if he should not waken to find himself in his narrow dungeon again, yet *life* itself *is a dream*, which he would fain dream well, that so a blessed awakening may follow.

II.

THE GREAT THEATRE OF THE WORLD.

No *auto* of Calderon has yet been translated into English either in whole or in part. Ticknor has presented, in his *History of Spanish Literature*, an account of one, *The Divine Orpheus*,* but wholly in prose; and in prose also *The Rambler* (December, 1855) has given a very fair analysis of *The Poison and the Antidote*. While I am fully conscious of the difficulty of the attempt, and the danger of utter and ridiculous failure, I venture here to offer an analysis of one of them, with sufficient verse quotations to give a somewhat clearer conception of what they are than could in any other way be gained. I might perhaps have chosen *autos* of Calderon in which he soars upon loftier wing; but this also seems to me to be admirably conceived and carried out, and is not quite so strange and startling as some perhaps might appear.

* Vol. ii., p. 323.

The title which it bears, *The Great Theatre of the World*, will sufficiently indicate its subject. The observation that

> "All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players,"

has now become a commonplace, yet is one containing in it so deep a moral significance, so profound a truth, that it can never grow old or out of date. It is one to which Calderon recurred again and again. Thus in his very noble play *To know Good and Evil*, he says:—

> "En el teatro del mundo
> Todos son representantes.
> Cual hace un Rey soberano,
> Cual un Principe, ò un grande,
> A quien obedecen todos;
> Y aquel punto, aquel instante
> Que dura el papel, es dueño
> De todas las voluntades.
> Acabóse la comedia,
> Y como el papel se acaba,
> La muerte en el vestuario
> A todos los deja iguales."

Nor is he content with making such passing allusions to it; but in the *auto*, of which I am about to present some specimens, this thought furnishes, as will be seen, the idea on which he has wrought throughout.

Before going further let me say to the reader, above all in respect of the opening scene, that what was not intended profanely or even over-boldly, but in strong religious earnestness and reverence, must be taken in no other sense by him; or, if he is unable so to take it, he will do best in not proceeding any further. In the first scene then the Author appears with a mantle spangled with stars, and the triple rays of light (potencias) on his forehead. He summons the world, which describes itself as being shaped and moulded under his creative word; and informs it of his purpose to set out upon it a great pageant and representation for the display of his power and glory. Men are to be his company. He bids the world that it do not fail to provide richly all things needful to enable the several players to enact their allotted parts. The world in one of the long speeches for which Calderon was famous (the present exceeds two hundred lines) promises obedience; that the properties and furniture shall not be wanting, and so withdraws. And now the Author summons his future company—the Rich Man, the Beggar, the King, the Husbandman,* the Lady or Beauty, the Recluse or Discretion, the Infant, as by a necessary prolepsis they are called, and distributes to them their several

* The English word gives exactly the force of the Spanish labrador; he is no day-laborer in our sense; for though he labors with his own hands, it is also on his own ground.

parts. The passage may well remind one of the distribution by Lachesis of the lots* to souls in *The Republic* of Plato. The parts are received with different feelings. Some are well pleased; others disappointed. The Beggar, for instance, seeing what his part must be, ventures a remonstrance:—

Why must I be acting so
Beggar in this comedy?
'T will be tragedy for me,
Albeit for the others no.
When on me you did bestow
This same part, bestowed you not
Equal soul and equal thought
As on him who king will be?
Why then unto him and me
Such unequal parts allot?
Were I made of other clay,
Or were fewer senses mine,
Or a spirit less divine,
Did my blood less freely play,
Cause sufficient, one might say,
Of this dealing would be shown:
But it seems too harshly done,
That I say not cruelly,
When no better man than I
So much better part has won.

* Κλήρους καὶ βίων παραδείγματα.

AUTHOR.

In the play you act he will
As securely win my praise,
Who the part of beggar plays
With true diligence and skill,
As who may the king's fulfil:
Equal too, they prove, the one
And other, when the play is done.
Well fulfil their part, and trust
I shall in award be just;
I will know of difference none;
Nor because more pain is laid
Upon thee who beggar art,
Is the king's a better part
Than the beggar's, if well played.
One and other shall be paid
Freely all their salary,
When it once deserved shall be;
And with any part it can
Be so earned, the life of man
Being all one comedy.

BEAUTY.

Wilt thou, sir, declare abroad
Of this comedy, what name
Bears it on the tongue of fame?

AUTHOR.

ACT YOUR BEST, FOR GOD IS GOD.

KING.

Of all errors 'twere the worst
In this so mysterious play
To mistake.

RICH MAN.

Then every way
Need is, we rehearse it first.

DISCRETION.

But how can it be rehearsed,
If without all power we be,
Soul to know or light to see,
Till the time arrives to play?

BEGGAR.

But without rehearsing, say
Can we act the comedy?
In the oldest, oftenest played,
If it be not re-essayed,
Blunders always will ensue:
Then, unless we prove this new,
Some sad errors will be made.

However, life is a play which must be acted without rehearsing, and they must accept its necessary conditions. Again, one of the company asks how they are to know the times of their entrances and

exits. This also, they are answered, it needs not for them to know beforehand; let them be ready at any moment to close their parts. He will summon them when it has reached its end. But how if at any time they are out in their parts, have forgotten or erred? The Law of Grace will act as prompter to set them right. Hereupon they are going off to the theatre, when the World meets and detains them.

WORLD.

All things now provided stand
To the end the comedy
May be acted worthily
Which for mortal men is planned.

KING.

Crown and purple I demand.

WORLD.

Why must crown and robe be thine?

KING.

Even because this part is mine.

WORLD.

'T is already furnished here.

[*Gives him crown and purple, and he goes out.*

BEAUTY.

Unto me hues bright and clear,

Jasmine, rose, and pink assign.
Leaf by leaf, and ray by ray,
Emulously let disclose
Day whatever lights he knows,
And whatever flowers the May;
Let with envy pine away
The great sun to look on me;
And as his huge disk to see,
Evermore the sunflower turns—
Flower that for my brightness yearns,
Let the sun my sunflower be.

WORLD.

But how play'st thou part so vain,
Vaunting to the World thy pride?

BEAUTY.

By this paper justified.

WORLD.

Which?

BEAUTY.

I beauty's part obtain.

WORLD.

Let all tints of costliest grain,
Deepest vermeil, snowiest white,
Vary for thee dark and light.

[*Gives her a chaplet of flowers.*

BEAUTY.

Round me richest hues I shed;
Founts, for me your mirrors spread,
Flowers, for me your carpets bright.

[*Goes out.*

RICH MAN.

Give felicities to me,
Wealth and all that wealth can bring;
For to taste each pleasant thing
I am come the World to see.

WORLD.

I will burst my breast for thee,
And draw forth to upper air
All the hidden treasures rare,
All the silver and the gold
Which my centre doth unfold,
Covetously hoarded there.

[*Gives him jewels.*

RICH MAN.

Proud, elate, and glorious I
With such treasure go my way. [*Goes out.*

DISCRETION.

Place to live in I to-day
From thy hands to seek am fain.

WORLD.

And what part dost thou sustain?

DISCRETION.

Cloistered wisdom I must be.

WORLD.

Cloistered wisdom, take from me
Sackcloth, discipline, and prayer.
[*Gives her a scourge and sackcloth.*

DISCRETION.

I this wisdom never were,
Did I more accept from thee. [*Goes out.*

WORLD.

Hast thou then no part to play,
That thou cravest naught of mine?

INFANT.

No, I need not aught of thine
For the little while I stay.
I shall never see the day,
Nor with thee shall I abide
Longer time than while I glide
From one dark and prison room
To another; and a tomb
Can not be of thee denied. [*Goes out.*

WORLD.

What dost thou seek, fellow, say?

HUSBANDMAN.

What I gladly would forego.

WORLD.

Pray, no more; your paper show.

HUSBANDMAN.

What if I should answer, Nay?

WORLD.

From your mien infer I may
That as rude and clownish hind
You your bread shall seek and find.

HUSBANDMAN.

Yes, that is my misery.

WORLD.

Take this spade then.

HUSBANDMAN.

Legacy
Adam has to us consigned!

[*Takes the spade and goes out.*

BEGGAR.

Now that thou hast unto those
Joys allotted, glories, gains,
For my portion give me pains,
Give me sufferings and woes;
For my paper nothing knows

Of that kingly majesty;
Those bright hues comes not to me;
Gold nor jewels I demand,
But rags only at thy hand.

WORLD.

But what part may thy part be?

BEGGAR.

It is utter wretchedness,
Want and weariness and ill,
'Tis to bear and suffer still,
It is anguish and distress,
All calamities to know,
To make trial of all wo;
Importuning, oh harsh task!
Always to have all to ask,
Nothing ever to bestow.
'Tis contempt and wrong and scorn,
It is mockery and blame,
It is insult, it is shame,
It is everything forlorn;
Grief that ever one was born,
It is squalor, infamy,
Tatters, filth, and beggary,
Want of all things, and no less
Hunger, cold, and nakedness;
For all this is poverty.

WORLD.

But I will not give thee aught;
For who beggar plays with me,
Him I nothing give in fee;
And it rather is my thought
Of these rags to leave thee naught
On thy back; for so I will,
Being world, my charge fulfil. [*Strips him.*

BEGGAR.

So this base world evermore
Clothes him that was clothed before,
But the bare makes barer still. [*Goes out.*

WORLD.

Since the stage is now supplied
With its motley company,
For I there a monarch see
With his kingdoms broad and wide,
And a beauty that with pride
Of her charms all senses awes,
Great men having great applause,
Clownish hinds and beggars bare,
Or who in still cloisters fare,
All brought forward for this cause
That the persons they may play
Of this present comedy,
To whom I a stage supply,
Fit adornments and array,

Robes or rags, as suit it may,
Oh look forth, the pageant see,
Divine Author, which to thee
Mortals play; this earthly ball
Let unfold, for there of all
That is done, the scene must be.

[*Two globes open with music at the same time; in the one shall be a glorious throne, and on it the Author sitting; in the other the representation shall take place; this last must have two doors; on the one a cradle painted, on the other a coffin.*

AUTHOR.

Since I have devised this play,
That my greatness may be shown,
I here seated on my throne,
Where it is eternal day,
Will my company survey.
Mortals, who your entrance due
By a cradle find, and who
By a tomb your exit make,
Pains in all your acting take,
Your great Author watches you.

Enter DISCRETION *with an instrument, and sings.*

Let praise the mighty Lord of earth and sky,
Sun, moon, and host of heaven;
To Him be praises given
From the fair flowers, the earth's emblazonry:
Let light and fire their praises lift on high,

And ice and frost and dew,
Summer and winter too,
And all that under this blue veil doth lie,
Whence He looks down, who still
Is Arbiter and Judge of good and ill.

AUTHOR.

Me no sound can more engage
Than the faithful canticle
On man's lips, which Daniel
Sang, that so he might assuage
The Chaldean monarch's rage.

The Law of Grace acts as prompter, to remind each of his part should he forget it, and to correct the mistakes which any may make, and thus the play within the play begins.

Enter BEAUTY *and* DISCRETION *at the door of the cradle.*

BEAUTY.

Come, and let us hand in hand
Through these pleasant meadows roam,
Which are May's delightful birthplace,
Which the sun woos evermore.

DISCRETION.

That to quit my cell I never
Wish, thou hast already known,
Never from the pleasant bondage
Of my cloister breaking forth.

BEAUTY.

And with thee must all things always
This austere aspèct put on?
Not a day of pleasure ever!
Tell me for what end did God
The flowers fashion, if the smell
Never shall the richness know
Of their fragrant censers swinging?
And the birds why made He more,
That with their delicious music
Float like wingèd harps of gold,
If the ear is not to hear them?
Why all tissues smooth and soft,
If the touch is not to crush them
With a free delight and bold?
Wherefore the delicious fruits,
If it were not to afford
With their seasonings to the taste
Cates of savors manifold?
Why in short has God created
Mountains, valleys, sun, or moon,
If the eye is not to see them?
Nay, with reason just I hold
We are thankless, not enjoying
All the rare gifts God bestows.

DISCRETION.

To enjoy by admiration

That may lawfully be done,
Thanking Him the while for all;
To enjoy their beauties no,
When we use, indeed misuse, them,
He their Giver quite forgot.
I abandon not my cloister,
Having this religion chose
To entomb my life, and thus
That I am Discretion show.

BEAUTY.

I that I am Beauty, while
To be seen and see I go. [*They part.*

WORLD.

Beauty and Discretion have not
Fellowship maintained for long.

DISCRETION.

How shall I my talent best
Turn to profit?

BEAUTY.

Make the most
Of my beauty how shall I?

LAW OF GRACE.

Act your best; for God is God.

WORLD.

Only one has heard, the other
Missed the words the prompter spoke

Others enter, the Rich Man, the Husbandman—everything is characteristic, and managed with infinite variety and resource on the part of the poet; but we must pass over much. Presently the Beggar enters.

BEGGAR.

Who among all living men
May a direr misery know
Than is mine? this rugged soil
Is the softest bed I own
And the best; which if all Heaven
For a canopy it boasts,
Lies unsheltered, unprotected
From the heat and from the cold.
Hunger me and thirst torment;
Give me patience, O my God.

RICH MAN.

How shall I make ostentation
Best of all my wealth?

BEGGAR.

My wo
How shall I the best endure?

LAW OF GRACE.

Doing well; for God is God.

RICH MAN.

Oh how that voice wearies me.

BEGGAR.

Oh how that voice me consoles.

DISCRETION.

To these gardens comes the king.

RICH MAN.

How it grieves my haughty soul
To do homage here.

BEAUTY.

Myself
I will place the king before,
To make trial if my beauty
Him may in its nets enfold.

HUSBANDMAN.

I will place myself behind him,
Lest he see me, and impose
Some new tax upon the peasant:
I expect no favor more.

Enter the KING.

KING.

Of whate'er the sun illumines,
Of whate'er the sea enfolds,

I am master absolute,
I am the undoubted lord.
Vassals of my sceptre all
Bow themselves where'er I go.
What do *I* need in the world?

LAW OF GRACE.

To do well; for God is God.

WORLD.

She to each and all in turn
Still the best suggests and prompts.

BEGGAR.

From my depth of desolation
I unhappy must behold
Blisses, which are all for others.
Thus the king, the supreme lord,
Glories in his regal state,
Nor the want remembers once
That I feel: thus too the lady,
On her charms attent alone,
Knows not, guesses not, if anguish
In the world is, want or wo.
The recluse, who unto prayer
Is addicted evermore,
If she serve God well, at least
With some comfort serveth God.
Nay, the husbandman, when weary

He returns from labor home,
Finds a decent board prepared him,
If it be no sumptuous board.
To the rich man all abounds;
And in all the world alone
Must I stand in need of all.
Therefore I to all approach,
For without me they can well
Live, but I without them no.
Of the lady I will venture
First to ask.—For love of God,
Give an alms!

BEAUTY.

Ye crystal streams,
Which my mirrors are, report
What adornments best become me—
How my tresses seemliest flow.

BEGGAR.

Dost thou not perceive me?

WORLD.

Fool!
Seest thou not thy pains are lost?
How should she remember thee,
Who her own self has forgot?

BEGGAR.

Since thy wealth exceeds all measure,
On my needs an alms bestow.

RICH MAN.

Are there, then, no gates to knock at?
Enterest thou my presence so?
But thou mightst at least have called,
Fellow, at the outer door,
Nor have pushed in boldly here!

BEGGAR.

Do not so much harshness show.

RICH MAN.

You are troublesome—away!

BEGGAR.

Will he not one alms afford,
Who so much has prodigally
On his pleasures lavished?

RICH MAN.

No!

WORLD.

Dives here and Lazarus
Of the parable behold!

BEGGAR.

Since my want and extreme need
No respect nor reason own,
I will sue the king himself:
Sire, on me an alms bestow.

KING.

A lord-almoner for this
I have named. What can I more?

WORLD.

With his ministers the king
Lulls his conscience to repose.

BEGGAR.

Husbandman, since thou receivest,
Through the blessing of the Lord,
For each grain to earth committed
Such an increase manifold,
My necessity from thee
Craves an alms.

HUSBANDMAN.

'Tis at the cost
Of good sowing, ploughing, sweating,
If I such receive of God.
Tell me, are you not ashamed,
A huge fellow, tall and strong,
This way begging? Work, I say;
Live not idle like a rogue!
If indeed to eat you have not,
Take this mattock, then, and go—
You may earn your bread with it.

BEGGAR.

In the play we act belongs

Unto me the poor man's part,
But the husbandman's not so.

HUSBANDMAN.

Friend, be thy part what it may,
Thee the Author never told
To enact the sturdy beggar.
Toil, and sweat, and labor strong,
These the poor man's proper part are.

BEGGAR.

Be it for the love of God:
You are rigorous, my brother.

HUSBANDMAN.

Shameless you and overbold.

BEGGAR.

Give me thou some consolation.

DISCRETION.

Pardon that it is not more.

We pass over a little in which the different parts are further brought out, and resume. The king makes a suggestion:—

Seeing that this life of ours
Is a play and nothing more,
And that we are all together

Travelling the self-same road,
Let its present smoothness lead us
Fellowship in talk to hold.

DISCRETION.

World this were not, if it did not
So much fellowship afford.

RICH MAN.

Let each tell by turns a story.

DISCRETION.

That were wearisome and long:
It were better each in order
Should his inmost thought unfold.

KING.

I gaze upon my kingdoms far and nigh,
The pomp, the pride, the glory that I own,
In whose variety has Nature shown
Her patience and her prodigality.
Towers I possess built up unto the sky,
And Beauty is a vassal at my feet;
Alike before me, as my servants, meet
Whatever is elsewhere of low or high,
A monster of so many necks, so strong,
So violent that I may wiselier rule,
Grant me what lore to monarchs should belong,
Lead and instruct me, Heavens, in wisdom's school;

For never with *one* yoke, to all applied,
May be subdued so many necks of pride.

WORLD.

He that he may govern rightly
Wisdom asks, like Solomon.

[*A sad Voice from within sings, on the side at which is the door of the coffin.*

Monarch of this fleeting realm,
Give thy pomp, thy glory o'er;
For on this world's theatre
Thou shalt play the king no more.

KING.

Speaks a sad voice in mine ear
That the part I play is o'er—
Voice which leaves me, at the hearing,
Without reason or discourse.
Then will I, my part concluded,
Quit the scene. But whither go?
For to that first portal, where
I my cradle did behold,
Thither, ah! return I can not.
Wo is us!—oh, rigorous doom!
That we can not toward the cradle
Make one step, but toward the tomb
Each must bring us nearer, nearer;
That the river, ocean-born,

From the sea drawn up, returning
Thither, may be sea once more;
That the rivulet, derived
From the river, may restore
What it drew from thence, again
Being what it was before;
But that man what once he has been
Never can be any more!
If my part has reached its ending,
Mighty Author, sovereign Lord,
Its innumerable errors
Pardon, which at heart I mourn.

[*He goes out at the door of the coffin, as do all the others in their turn.*

WORLD.

Well the king his part has ended,
With repentance at the close.

BEAUTY.

From the circle of his vassals,
Pomp and glory of his court,
Fails the king.

HUSBANDMAN.

So spring showers fail not
At the due time for our corn:
With good crops, and without king,
We shall not have much to mourn.

DISCRETION.

Yet withal it is great pity—

BEAUTY.

And a matter to deplore.
What shall we do now?

RICH MAN.

Return
To the talk we held before:
Say what in thy thought is passing.

BEAUTY.

This is passing in my thought—

WORLD.

But the living for the dead
Take not long to be consoled.

HUSBANDMAN.

And, above all, when the dead
Leave behind them ample store.

BEAUTY.

I gaze upon my beauty bright and pure,
Nor grudge the king, nor to his pomps incline;
For a more glorious empery mine,
Even that which beauty doth to me assure;
For if the king the bondage may secure

Of bodies, I of souls. I then define
With right my kingdom as the most divine,
Since souls can Beauty to her sway allure.
A little world by sages man has been
Called; but dominion if o'er him I claim,
Since every world contains an earth and heaven,
I may presume, nor thus should overween,
Who gave to man of little world the name,
Of little heaven to woman would have given.

WORLD.

She remembers not the saying
Of Ezekiel, when he showed
How through pride was perfect beauty
To corruption foul resolved.

The Voice *sings.*

All the beauty of the world
Is a flower of hastiest doom;
Let it fail, then; for the night
Of its little day is come.

BEAUTY.

Let all earthly beauty fail,
So has sung a mournful song:
Let it fail not; but, returning,
Wear the grace that first it wore.
But, ah me! there is, alas!

Neither white nor ruddy rose,
Which has to the flattering day
And the wooing sun unrolled
The rich beauty of its leaflets,
But must wither; there is known
Never one to hide itself
In its green bud any more.*
But what matters that the flower,
Short-lived glory of the morn,
Fade and fail beneath the kisses
Of the great and golden orb?
What comparison with me
Can perchance a brief flower hold,
In whose being life and death,
Scarcely sundered, dwell next door?
None, for that fair flower am I,
Destined to endure so long,
That the sun who saw my rising
Shall my setting ne'er behold?
If eternal, how can I
Ever fail? O Voice, resolve!

* I must quote these eight lines in the original for their exquisite beauty:—

"Mas ay de mí! que no hay rosa
De blanco ó roxo color,
Que á las lisonjas del dia,
Que á los alhagos del sol
Saque á deshojar sus hojas,
Que no caduque, pues no
Vuelve ninguna á cubrirse
Dentro del verde botòn."

The Voice *sings.*

Mortal flower in body thou,
Though eternal in the soul.

BEAUTY.

There is no reply to render
Unto this distinction more.
Forth from yonder cradle came I,
And toward this tomb I go.
Much it grieves me that my part
Has no better been performed. [*Goes out.*

WORLD.

She her part has finished well,
With repentance at the close.

RICH MAN.

From amid her gala pride,
Ornaments, and glorious shows,
Beauty fails.

HUSBANDMAN.

So bread and wine
Fail not, nor our Easter pork,
Beauty without very much
Of regret from me may go.

DISCRETION.

Yet 'tis a sad thought withal—

BEGGAR.

And it well might make us mourn.
What shall we do now?

RICH MAN.

Return
To the talk we held before.

HUSBANDMAN.

When I mark the care immense
Which I give my business here,
While nor summer's heat I fear,
Nor the winter's cold intense,
And then mark the negligence
In the soul's work by me shown,
O'er this lukewarmness I groan,
This ingratitude bemoan,
Rendering thanks unto the field,
Which the crop doth only yield,
But to God who sent it, none.

WORLD.

He is near to gratitude,
Who himself a debtor owns.

BEGGAR.

To this laborer I incline,
Though he chided me before.

The Voice *sings.*

Husbandman, of all thy toil
Has arrived the fatal close;
Thou must till another soil—
What that is, God only knows!

HUSBANDMAN.

If my part fulfilled I have not
With the care and pains I owed,
I am grieved that I am grieved not
That my sorrow is not more. [*Goes out.*

RICH MAN.

From among his ploughs and mattocks,
Sweat, and dust, and labor, lo!
Disappears the husbandman.

BEGGAR.

And has left us here to mourn.

DISCRETION.

What shall we do now?

RICH MAN.

Return
To the talk we held before.
I, then, in the rear of others,
What is in my mind will show.
Who that lives were not dismayed

To observe our life a flower,
Springing with the morning hour,
Drooping with the evening shade?
If it, then, so soon must fade,
Let us enjoy merrily
The brief moments as they fly:
Let us eat and drink to-day,
All our appetites obey,
Since to-morrow we must die.

WORLD.

That the proposition is,
Which the Gentiles have put forth;
As Isaiah saith.

BEGGAR.

My turn
Follows now, my mind to show.
Would the day might perish quite,
Day when me my mother bore—
Perish utterly the night,
When I was conceived before
For this wo and undelight!
Never let the daylight pure
Bid that darkness to have done;
Ever let that night endure:
Let it look for light, and none
Find of moon, or stars, or sun.

Lord, if I in this way mourn,
'Tis no utterance of despair
At my sad estate forlorn,
But my lamentations are
That in sin I have been born.

WORLD.

Semblance of despair his passion
Wears, but yet it means not so:
He his birthday cursing, curses
His birth-sin, as Job before.

The Voice *sings.*

Its appointed time had joy,
Sorrow its appointed close:
To your reckoning come alike,
From those blisses, and these woes.

RICH MAN.

Wo is me!

BEGGAR.

What joyful tidings!

RICH MAN.

And dost thou no shudderings own
At that voice which called thee?

BEGGAR.

Yes.

RICH MAN.

Thinkst thou not to flee, then?

BEGGAR.

No!
That I shudder at this summons
Was but natural to the soul
Of a man, who, being man,
Must have awful thoughts of God.
But why flee, when flight avails not?
For if Power found no resource
Fleeing to its haughty fortress,
Nor yet Beauty to her boasts,
Where should Poverty escape?
Rather thousand thanks I owe,
For if now my life has ending,
With my life will end my woes.

RICH MAN.

But to quit the theatre
How is it thou dost not mourn?

BEGGAR.

While I leave no good thing in it;
Of my own free will I go.

RICH MAN.

Most reluctant I, whose heart
Tarries with its worldly store.

BEGGAR.

What delight!

RICH MAN.

What misery!

BEGGAR.

What sweet comfort!

RICH MAN.

What sharp wo!

[*They go out.*

WORLD.

In their deaths how different
Have the rich and poor man showed!

DISCRETION.

In effect upon the stage
I am tarrying now alone.

WORLD.

That which longest with me tarries
Is Religion evermore.

DISCRETION.

Though she can not have an end,
Yet can I, who her am not
In her essence, but one rather
Who this better portion chose.

And or e'er the summons finds me,
I the summons go before
Of the grave, who in my life
Have entombed myself, and so
Give an end to this day's play.
You who may the errors note
Of to-day, have care to mend them,
When arrives to-morrow's show.

The stage is left empty; the brief play of life has ended; and now the World enters to recover from each the properties with which he furnished them during the period of their acting, but which now are theirs no longer. The scene which follows, and which strikes me as a very fine one, will remind the classical scholar of one of Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead*, greatly as the Christian poet excels the scoffer of Samosata, not merely in moral earnestness, which is of course, but also in all his subordinate details as well. The *ottava rima* in which it is composed is not of unfrequent use in the statelier and more solemn parts of Calderon's plays.

WORLD.

The play was short—but what time with the play
Of this life did it otherwise befall,
Which in an entrance and an exit may,
Rightly considered, be included all?
Now from the stage are turning all away,

Their form, and all which they their own did call,
Being brought back to its materials just;
Dust they shall quit me, as they entered dust.
From all I will recover now with care
The toys I lent them, furnishing each one
While they their parts on life's stage acting were,
Theirs only till the comedy was done.
Here to this portal will I now repair,
And overpass my threshold there shall none,
Till he restore the things he had in trust:
Dust they shall quit me, as they entered dust!

Enter the KING.

Say what the part that was sustained by thee,
Being the first who to my hands art brought?

KING.

But has the world so soon forgotten me?

WORLD.

Of what has been the world remembers naught.

KING.

I am that one who held all realms in fee;
That of the sun a golden light have caught
From his first waking in the lap of morn,
Till in the arms of night he sinks forlorn.
I ruled, I judged, I guided many a land;

I found, I won, I left a glorious name;
Great cares I entertained, great projects planned;
I fought, and victory to my banners came;
I lifted whom I would to high command;
Rare matter I bequeathed for after-fame;
And under gorgeous canopies I sate,
And thrones and crowns were mine and sceptred state.

WORLD.

Well, leave, let go, and put this crown aside;
Strip off, renounce, forget that dignity;
Let thy poor person unaccompanied
Make from life's farce its exit nakedly.
The purple which thou boastest of in pride
Soon by another shall invested be,
For from my harsh grasp thou wilt seek in vain
Crown, sceptre, laurel, purple, to detain.

KING.

Didst thou not give me that loved ornament?
Then what thou gavest wilt thou take away?

WORLD.

Ay, for it was not given, but merely lent.
And for the time thou hadst a part to play.
Thy trappings, to another to present,
I now require, and all thy rich array.

KING.

But how of wealthy seekest thou the name,
With naught to give, but what thou first must claim?
What profit shall I, after all, have won,
That to the world I have enacted king?

WORLD.

According as 'twas well or badly done,
'T will praise or blame from the great Author bring.
Me it concerns not; knowledge take I none
What pains were thine, thy part accomplishing:
My task is only this array to claim,
For naked they must go, who naked came.

Enter BEAUTY.

And what was thy part?

BEAUTY.

Beauty's perfect bloom.

WORLD.

What lent I thee?

BEAUTY.

A faultless loveliness.

WORLD.

Where is it, then?

BEAUTY.

Behind me in the tomb!

WORLD.

Here Nature can not her sharp grief repress,
Seeing how short is Beauty's earthly doom,
Still growing worse than what it was, and less;
I, seeking to reclaim it, seek in vain;
Thou tak'st it not, nor I with it remain.
The king has left his majesty with me;
Greatness with me will leave its proud attire;
Beauty alone recovered can not be,
Since Beauty with its owner doth expire.
Look in this glass.

BEAUTY.

Myself therein I see.

WORLD.

Where is the fair face all did once admire?
That which I lènt thee do thou now return.

BEAUTY.

It all has mouldered in the funereal urn!
There left I all sweet colors and bright hues;
Jasmines and corals I abandoned there;
There did I all my flowers, my roses lose,
And crystals there and ivory shattered were;
And that did all clear portraitures confuse,
And tarnished all clear lines and features fair;
There was eclipsed the brightness of my light;
There you will meet but darkness, dust, and night!

Enter the HUSBANDMAN.

WORLD.

You, villain, what did you play?

HUSBANDMAN.

I was fain
To play the villain—start not at the name;
How should I else, seeing your fashion vain
Must for the husbandman this title frame?
He am I, whom the courtier with disdain
Treats evermore with words of scorn and shame;
He am I, though this little grieves me now,
For whom the world had still its "thee" and "thou."

WORLD.

Quit what I gave thee.

HUSBANDMAN.

What was that, I pray?

WORLD.

A spade I gave thee.

HUSBANDMAN.

Oh, fine implement!

WORLD.

Well, good or bad, with that you paid your way.

HUSBANDMAN.

Whose heart were not for very anger rent?
Why, what a cursèd world is this, I say!
Of all which avarice is on hoarding bent,
A mattock, instrument of wholesome toil,
One can not rescue from the general spoil.

Enter the RICH MAN *and the* BEGGAR.

WORLD.

Who passes?

RICH MAN.

One who wishes he might ne'er
Have left thee.

BEGGAR.

One who panted every day
To leave thee.

WORLD.

But whence springs this difference rare?
One grieves to quit me, one had grieved to stay.

RICH MAN.

Because that I was rich and mighty there.

BEGGAR.

Because I had the beggar's part to play.

WORLD.

Let go these toys.

BEGGAR.

Lo! what good cause was mine,
Leaving the world to mourn not, nor repine!

Enter the INFANT.

WORLD.

To you a part at first the Author gave:
That you appeared not, how did it befall?

INFANT.

My life you re-demanded in a grave;
What you had given me, there returned I all.

Enter DISCRETION.

WORLD.

You, what did you for your adornment crave,
When you did at the gates of being call?

DISCRETION.

I asked for a strict vow, obedience,
A scourge, a cord, and rigid abstinence.

WORLD.

Well, leave them in my hands, that none may say
They have delivered anything from me.

DISCRETION.

I will not; prayers and good works do not stay
In this world, can not here detainèd be;

And with me I must carry them away,
That something may survive thyself in thee.
Thou, if thy mind is, to resume them strive.

WORLD.

Thee of thy good deeds I can not deprive:
These only from the world have rescued been.

KING.

Who would not now no realms have called his own!

BEAUTY.

Who would not now have ne'er been Beauty's queen!

RICH MAN.

Who would not fain have no such riches known!

BEGGAR.

Who would not willingly more griefs have seen!

HUSBANDMAN.

Who would not more of toil have undergone!

WORLD.

It is too late—for after death in vain
You seek to blot out sins, or merits gain.
But now that I have marred the beauteous brow,
And the lent trappings mine again have made,
That I have caused all haughtiness to bow,

That I have equalled sceptre and rude spade,
Unto the stage of truth I send you now;
On this one only fictions have been played.

KING.

But why dost thou so rudely us dismiss,
Who greetedst us so fair?

WORLD.

The cause is this:
What time a man doth anything expect,
Waiting the gift his hands he places so;
Which thing when he would scornfully reject,
With hands in this wise he will from him throw:
Even thus the cradle for a man is decked
With mouth above; reverse its mouth, and lo!
You have his tomb: even thus I gave you room
As cradle then, but now dismiss as tomb.

Let me take the opportunity which these last words suggest of adding something here, which will not be altogether out of its place. There is no surer mark of genius than the recognition of the mystery which so often lies in the common and the familiar. Only genius pierces or lifts the veil which custom and use have for most men so effectually thrown over these, that the most wonderful and most pregnant with meaning has come to have no meaning at all, if only its lesson has been constantly repeated; according to

that proverb, "What is ever seen is never seen." Only genius detects in the humblest very often a significant symbolism of the highest, and finds the ever new in that which is the oldest of all. Calderon will endure excellently well to be tried by this test of genius. The mystery of the common, the symbolic character of many of our most ordinary actions and customs, is precious to him; and he constantly seeks to interpret it to others, and not to suffer it to pass by them unobserved. The ever-recurring mystery of sleep and waking as the daily rehearsal of death and resurrection;* the dews and sunshine of earth, corresponding to the tears and laughter of those that are its dwellers,† or, as here, the likeness of the tomb to

* Thus in *Belshazzar's Feast*:—

Descanso del sueño hace
El hombre, ay Dios! sin que advierta
Que quando duerme, y despierta,
Cada dia muere, y nace.
Que vivo cadaver yáce
Cada dia, pues rendida
La vida á una breve homicida,
Que es su descanso no advierte
Una leccion, que la muerte
Le vá estudiando á la vida

† Al tiempo que ya la salva
Del sol estos montes dora
Sale riendo la aurora,
Y sale llorando el alba;
Risa y lágrimas envia
El dia al amanecer,
Para darnos á entender
Que amenece cada dia

a cradle reversed which has cast out its inmate,* all these have their meaning and lesson for him; and to this meaning and lesson he recurs again and again. But to return to our own matter, which is now rapidly drawing to its end; but yet does not close without some further characteristic touches.

Entre lirios y azucenas,
Entre rosas y jazmines,
Para dos contrarios fines
De contentos y de penas.

* This re-appears in *The Steadfast Prince:*—

Bien sé al fin, que soy mortal,
Y que no hay hora segura
Y por eso dió una forma
Con una materia en una
Semejanza la razon
Al ataud y á la cuna.
Accion nuestra es natural,
Cuando recibir procura
Algo un hombre, alzar las manos
En esta manera juntas:
Mas cuando quiere arrojarlo,
De aquella misma accion usa,
Pues las vuelve boca abajo,
Porque asi las desocupa.
El mundo, cuando nacemos,
En señal de que nos busca,
En la cuna nos recibe,
Y en ella nos asegura
Boca arriba; pero cuando,
O con desden, ó con furia,
Quiere arrojarnos de sí,
Vuelve las manos que junta,
Y aquel instrumento mismo
Forma esta materia muda;
Pues fue cuna boca arriba
Lo que boca abajo es tumba.

BEGGAR.

Since the world in this rude fashion
From its bosom thrusts us naked,
Let us seek that splendid feast,
Which has been prepared, the banquet
Which shall recompense our toils.

KING.

Wilt thou too affront my greatness,
Daring thus to pass before me?
Has it from thy memory faded,
Wretched mendicant, already
That thou wast my slave so lately?

BEGGAR.

Now that thy part is concluded,
We are equal, slave and master,
In this vestry of the tomb.
What thou *hast* been, little matters.

KING.

How forgettest thou that alms
Yesterday of me thou cravest?

BEGGAR.

How forgettest thou that such
Thou refusedst?

BEAUTY.

So soon failest
Thou in the respect thou owest
Unto me as richer, fairer?

DISCRETION.

All of us are equal now,
Having laid aside our garments;
For in this poor winding sheet
No distinction more remaineth.

RICH MAN.

Do you go before me, villain?

HUSBANDMAN.

Leave this foolish dream of greatness;
For, once dead, thou art the shadow
Of the sun which thou wast lately.

RICH MAN.

Some strange fear in me the prospect
Of the Author's presence wakens.

BEGGAR.

Author of the earth and heaven,
All thy company, the players,
Who that briefest comedy
Played of human life so lately,
Are arrived, of that thy promise

Mindful, of that noble banquet.
Let the curtains be drawn back,
And thy glorious seat unveilèd.

With music the celestial globe opens once more;—but the little which remains may without difficulty be guessed; at all events it is too serious and solemn to be followed into its details, at least with our feelings and associations—seriously and solemnly, although this, as all the rest, is both intended and carried out by the great Christian poet, my brief specimens of whom have now come to their conclusion.

APPENDIX

A Persian proverb says, "You may bring a nosegay to the town; but you can not bring the garden." This is true, and "Beauties of Shakespeare," or "Beauties" of any one else who is indeed beautiful, abundantly attest the truth of the adage. For these "beauties" are in the first place but *gathered* flowers, instead of *growing* flowers; and then besides, they form generally the most insignificant portion of the wealth, whereof they are presented as specimens and representatives. Still, if they are only offered and accepted at what they are worth, there is no reason why they should not be made; nor should I object to "Beauties of Calderon," if any one were to bring them together. At the same time, the few extracts from him which form the present appendix, are not presented in this sense, or under this aspect; but rather to give the reader, who may know of him only through this little volume, some further examples besides the few which the notes have offered, of his metres, his diction, his skill in wielding and calling out the powers of his native tongue. I have of course sought out and selected

passages of beauty, as being those by which he would be most justly represented.

I. It has been mentioned already that assonants constitute the staple of his verse. Here is a rich and poetical description in this metre of a great armament at sea, as it appeared to one who beheld it slowly advancing from a distance. It occurs in *The Steadfast Prince*:—

Yo lo sé, porque en el mar
Una mañana, á la hora
Que medio dormido el sol,
Atropellando las sombras
Del ocaso, desmaraña
Sobre jasmines y rosas
Rubios cabellos, que enjuga
Con paños de oro á la aurora
Lágrimas de fuego y nieve,
Que el sol convirtió en aljófar,
Que á largo trecho del agua
Venia una gruesa tropa
De naves; si bien entonces
No pudo la vista absorta
Determinarse á decir
Si eran naos, ó si eran rocas;
Porque como en los matices
Sútiles pinceles logran
Unos visos, unos lejos,
Que en perspectiva dudosa
Parecen montes tal vez,
Y tal ciudades famosas,

Porque la distancia siempre
Monstruos imposibles forma,
Así en paises azules
Hicieron luces y sombras,
Confundiendo mar y cielo
Con las nubes y las ondas,
Mil engaños á la vista;
Pues ella entonces curiosa,
Solo percibió los bultos,
Y no distinguió las formas.
Primero nos pareció,
Viendo que sus puntos tocan
Con el cielo, que eran nubes,
De las que á la mar se arrojan
A concebir en zafir
Lluvias, que en cristal abortan;
Y fue bien pensado, pues
Esta innumerable copia
Pareció que pretendia
Sorberse el mar gota á gota
Luego de marinos monstruos
Nos pareció errante copia,
Que á acompañar á Neptuno
Salian de sus alcobas;
Pues sacudiendo las velas,
Que son del viento lisonja,
Pensamos que sacudian
Las alas sobre las olas.
Ya parecia mas cerca
Una inmensa Babilonia,

De quien los pénsiles fueron
Flámulas, que el viento azotan.
Aqui ya desengañada
La vista, mejor se informa
De que era armada, pues vió
A los sulcos de las proas,
Cuando batidas espumas
Ya se encrespan, ya se entorchan,
Rizarse montes de plata,
De cristal cuajarse rocas.

In *The Great Zenobia*, the captive queen answers Aurelian, her boastful conqueror, in the following language:—

Aureliano, las venganzas
De la fortuna son estas,
Que ni son grandezas tuyas,
Ni culpas mias. Pues llegas
A conocer sus mudanzas,
Valor finge, ánimo muestra;
Que mañana es otro dia,
Y á una breve fácil vuelta
Si truecan las monarquías,
Y los imperios se truecan.
Vence y calla; pues yo sufro
Y espero; para que veas,
Que, pues yo no desconfio,
Será razon que tú temas.
No la ambicion te levante
Tanto, que midiendo esferas
De tu misma vanidad,

La altura te desvanezca.
Sale el alba coronada
De rayos, y el sol despliega
Al mundo cendales de oro,
Que enjuguen llanto de perlas;
Sube hasta el zenit; mas luego
Declina, y la noche negra
Por las exequias del sol
Doseles de luto cuelga.
Impelida de los vientos
Con alas de lino vuela
Alta nave, presumiendo
Todo el mar pequeña esfera;
Y en un punto, en un instante
Brama el viento, el mar se altera,
Que parece que sus ondas
Van á apagar las estrellas.
El dia teme la noche,
La serenidad espera
La borrasca, el gusto vive
A espaldas de la tristeza.

II. Little fables, or other narratives, compositions perfectly rounded and complete in themselves, occur not unfrequently in Calderon's plays. Here is a beautiful example, drawn from his comedy, *The Poor Man is all Plots*:—

Estaba un almendro ufano
De ver, que su pompa era
Alba de la primavera,
Y mañana del verano;

Y viendo su sombra vana,
Que el viento en penachos mueve
Hojas de púrpura y nieve,
Aves de carmin y grana,
Tanto se desvaneció,
Que, Narciso de las flores,
Empezó á decirse amores;
Cuando un lirio humilde vió,
A quien vano dijo asi:
Flor, que magestad no quieres,
¿No te desmayas y mueres
De invidia de verme á mí?
Sopló en esto el austro fiero,
Y desvaneció cruel
Toda la pompa, que á él
Le desvaneció primero.
Vió, que caduco y helado
Diluvios de hojas derrama,
Seco tronco, inùtil rama,
Yerto cadáver del prado.
Volvió al lirio, que guardaba
Aquel verdor que tenia,
Y contra la tirania
Del tiempo se conservaba,
Y dijole: venturoso
Tú, que en uno estado estás
Permaneciente, jamas
Envidiado, ni envidioso.
Tu vivir solo es vivir,
No llegues á florecer,

Porque tener que perder,
Solo es tener que sentir.

Again, of what exquisite lyric beauty, of what perfect finish and completeness in itself, is the following address to the cross, in the play called *The Devotion of the Cross*, which has been referred to already.

Arbol, donde el cielo quiso
Dar el fruto verdadero
Contra el bocado primero,
Flor del nuevo paraiso,
Arco de luz, cuyo aviso
En píelago mas profundo
La paz publicó del mundo,
Planta hermosa, fértil vid,
Harpa del nuevo David,
Tabla del Moises segundo:
Pecador soy, tus favores
Pido por justicia yo,
Pues Dios en ti padeció
Solo por los pecadores,
A mí me debes tus loores,
Que por mí solo muriera
Dios, si mas mundo no hubiera.*

III. A considerable number of sonnets are scattered up and down through Calderon's plays. Some of these are among the best which the literature of Spain possesses.

* They may be rendered thus:—

Tree, which Heaven has willed to dower

This, it is true, is not in itself very high commendation; for Spanish poetry, while it possesses an almost innumerable multitude of sonnets, yet can boast of very few which are of first rate excellence, which will at all bear comparison with the great Italian or English poems in this kind. Calderon's sonnets are sometimes found in pairs, set one over against the other, and corresponding to, or mutually completing each other, as these two, beautiful in themselves, but deriving added beauty from the circumstances of those that speak them.

Estas, que fueron pompa y alegría,
Despertando al albor de la mañana,
A la tarde serán lástima vana,
Durmiendo en brazos de la noche fria.
Este matíz, que al cielo desafia,
Iris listado de oro, nieve y grana,
Será escarmiento de la vida humana,
Tanto se emprende en término de un dia.

With that true fruit whence we live,
As that other, death did give;
Of new Eden loveliest flower;
Bow of light, that in worst hour
Of the worst flood signal true
O'er the world, of mercy threw;
Fair plant, yielding sweetest wine;
Of our David harp divine;
Of our Moses tables new;
Sinner am I, therefore I
Claim upon thy mercies make,
Since alone for sinners' sake
God on thee endured to die;
And for me would God have died
Had there been no world beside.

A florecer las rosas madrugaron,
Y para envejecerse florecieron
Cuna y sepulcro en un boton hallaron.
Tales los hombres sus fortunas vieron,
En un dia nacieron y espiraron,
Que pasados los siglos, horas fueron.

This, which laments the brevity of the life of the flowers, finds its counterpart in the twin sonnet, which mourns over that of the stars as briefer still.

Esos rasgos de luz, esas centellas,
Que cobran con amagos superiores
Alimentos del sol en resplandores,
Aquello viven, que se duellen dellas,
Flores nocturnas son, aunque tan bellas,
Efimeras padecen sus ardores;
Pues si un dia es el siglo de las flores,
Una noche es la edad de las estrellas.
De esa pues primavera fugitiva
Ya nuestro mal, ya nuestro bien se infiere,
Registro es nuestro, ó muera el sol, ó viva.
¿ Qué duracion habrá que el hombre espere?
¿ O qué mudanza habrá, que no reciba
De astro, que cada noche nace y muere?

And the following is good:—

Apenas el invierno helado y cano
Este monte de nieves encanece,
Cuando la primavera le florece,
Y el que helado se vió, se mira ufano.
Pasa la primavera, y el verano

Los rigores del sol sufre y padece.
Llega el fertil otoño, y enriquece
El monte de verdor, de fruta el llano.
Todo vive sujeto á la mudanza;
De un dia y otro dia los engaños
Cumplen un año, y este al otro alcanza.
Con esperanza sufre desengaños
Un monte, que, á faltarle la esperanza,
Ya se rindiera al peso de los años.

IV. Nothing can be more exquisite than the little fragments of song, tiny drops of melody, which yet sometimes reflect a whole world of thought and feeling, which are scattered through his plays. Here are a few — what depth as well as beauty is in the second!

I.

Las flores del romero,
Niña Isabel,
Hoy son flores azules,
Y mañana serán miel.

II.

Es el engaño traidor,
Y el desengaño leal;
El uno dolor sin mal,
Y el otro mal sin dolor.

III.

Aprended, flores, de mi
Lo que va de ayer a hoy;

Que ayer maravilla fui,
Y hoy sombra mia aun no soy.

IV.

Ruiseñor, que volando vas,
Cantando finezas, cantando favores,
O quanta pena y envidia me das;
Pero no; que si hoy cantas amores,
Tu tendrás zelos, y tu llorarás.

V.

No es menester que digais
Cuyas sois, mis alegrías;
Que bien se vé, que sois mias,
En lo poco que durais.

THE END.

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